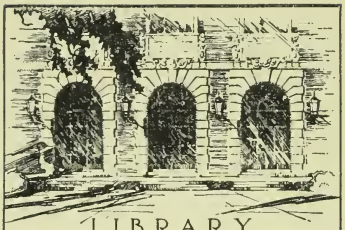

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WHITE AND RED

By J. R. HENSLOWE,

AUTHOR OF "DOROTHY COMPTON."

"A passage perillus makethe a port pleasant."
Ao. 1568. ARTHUR POOLE.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL I.

LONDON:
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BOOK I.—CLOUDS.

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CHAPTER I.

CENNES.

The sun went down in beauty ; not a cloud
Darkened its radiance, yet there might be seen
A few fantastic vapours scattered o'er
The face of the blue heavens.

"THE red rose a shade more to the left. Turn thy face to me, child. There—a touch of powder and thou wouldst be perfect, little one."

"But, Gabrielle, Eugène will not let me wear powder."

"Eugène, indeed! And would M. Eugène carry his tyranny until you come to Paris?"

"I do not think I shall visit Paris. Eugène says—"

"Again Eugène! I know he thinks we are all terribly wicked, and poor Gabrielle the blackest sheep in the flock."

If so, she was a very handsome one. Tall, lithe, graceful; a complexion so perfect that her dearest friends all vowed she painted; masses of dark hair, *not* powdered at present; lustrous hazel eyes; Gabrielle de Thouars could, and indeed did, say pretty much what she pleased, sure of an indulgent audience, if composed of the opposite sex. One of her own might be more disposed to be critical, all the more that to the lady herself this was a matter of profound indifference.

She was at present employing her white fingers in arranging and disarranging some flowers in the fair hair of a girl a few years younger, who, though not without a certain beauty of her own, was a decided foil to Mdlle. de Thouars.

They were sitting on the steps of an old

moss-grown terrace garden. Behind them was the so-called château of Cennes; Gabrielle used to call it the castle of the Sleeping Beauty. Before them, past the fountain whose waters rose and fell with a soft musical plash, was a fragrant avenue of lime trees, tall and verdant, and murmurous with music of the bees. Down beyond lay the village with its well, where the women were just now congregating for their evening gossip; and farther off still, the Maine flowing stately to join the Loire, and on its banks, Angers the Black City. Angers, where John of England had held wine and wassail long ago, when Arthur was mustering the vassals of Bretagne to his standard, and where the houses he built still stood, to testify to his unquiet rule.

All was drowsy and peaceful in that summer, although it was the year 1791. But down in Anjou, even near so "red" a town as Angers, people did not know very much about

what was passing in the capital. There, and further westward, the seigneurs were not what they were in other parts of France, as was very soon to be abundantly testified. It is true, the crops failed year after year there as elsewhere, but there was not the provocation of the forced road-making, nor the wrong and oppression which were to find such stupendous atonement. There were good landlords in some places, and there was a good one here at Cennes. No one complained of him—yet.

Gabrielle chattered on.

"Never mind, Eulalie, M. de Limeuil will take you to Paris, and then—"

Eulalie's pale face flushed a little.

"But, Gabrielle, I have not seen M. de Limeuil since I was fifteen."

"So much the better. You will strike him with all the force of novelty, and he will do everything you wish. But is it possible? Three years! Ah, that tyrant Eugène!"

"No, Gabrielle, Eugène is not a tyrant. He is, ah, so good to me," and the grey serious eyes filled.

Gabrielle bent her stately head and kissed her.

"I know, I know—but I like to rouse thee in defence of Eugène. If M. de Limeuil only knew what a rival he had in thy brother. But here he comes, and M. le Curé too."

Two men came out of one of the tall windows and walked slowly along the flagged pathway, talking earnestly. We shall have something to say of them both before they pass out of this history, so they merit a separate description. Eugène Desiré Marie de St Hilaire, count and peer of France, seigneur of Cennes, brother and guardian of little Eulalie, was by no means an ordinary looking person. He was ten years her senior, and a stranger would have added half-a-dozen years to that. He was tall,

well-made, and wore his powder and lace jabot with the inalienable grand air which the consciousness of five-and-twenty unblemished descents gave to the French noble before the Revolution. He was not handsome, but had a gentle, refined face, so like his sister's that no one could for a moment mistake the relationship, but what was pensive softness in the features of the girl became grave thoughtfulness in those of the man. Père Florian, the curé of the village, to whom he had been talking, was a spare, slight man, verging on fifty, looking even thinner and more meagre than he really was, in his black soutane. Beneath his tonsure the iron-grey hair fell back from his lean, eager face, remarkable for nothing but the resolute angle of the jaw, and the acute, brilliant eyes. They were, however, enough in themselves to redeem the most ordinary face. Eulalie declared they frightened her. Gabrielle,

whom nothing frightened, said, nevertheless, that Père Florian's eyes saw through everybody and everything. She got up now and made a curtsy, dropping her eyes demurely, and then looking up mischievously through her long eyelashes at Count Eugène. He did not seem to notice the glance, though he bowed, but addressed his sister.

"The good father will remain to supper with us, my sister; he came to speak to me."

"Is it bad news, mon père?" asked Eulalie timidly, after an inquisitive glance at Eugene.

"It is not very pleasant, but one does not hear of the most agreeable things now," said the curé quietly.

"Ah, then," interrupted Gabrielle, "pray do not tell us anything about it. We love not to hear of disagreeable things. Let us enjoy the flowers, this heavenly evening, and so on, whilst we may."

Pere Florian's grave eyes were fixed on her face for a second or two before he answered,

"Be it so. I trust a day will not come to you speedily, when the sunshine will be blotted out, the flowers withered, and you *must* listen."

Gabrielle threw up her handsome head with an imperious gesture.

"Trust me, mon père, I never listen to what does not please me."

"Never mind her; I want to know the news," said Eulalie.

"It is not very much after all," said her brother; "only it is another sign of the times. Gaston Trochu, who went away two years ago, has come back again, and has been making speeches at the forge and elsewhere."

"Nanette's son! Is he a Jacobin, then?"

"Ah, Jacobin, bonnet-rouge, what you will."

"But the people will not listen to him,

Eugène; they love thee, thou art good to them," said the faithful little sister. He smiled rather sadly at her.

"What does that signify? I cannot stop the motion of a vast machine by standing in front of its wheels. Nay," he added half to himself, "it is more likely to crush me for the venture."

The priest had been sitting, with clasped hands resting on his knee, looking straight before him, and he now spoke as if following out his own train of thought.

"'From generation to generation!' oh awful decree that cannot alter. The sins of the fathers shall be visited on the children, even on the innocent."

Gabrielle had been silent, and seemed, for her, awe-struck, but she looked up now impatiently.

"See, my father, you have frightened our little Eulalie, she is pale. Do let us go in."

And as no one had any objection to offer, her suggestion was followed. Only, as they passed in at the window, Eugène drew near Père Florian.

"Is it coming in our day?" he said.

"Look round you, and answer the question to yourself," said the priest in the same tone.

"Ah, well," rejoined the other, "I think I could be content to suffer, if my pain could wipe away the guilt of oppression; but she —oh mon père, not the most innocent—" He glanced at Eulalie, who had passed on into the salon, and stood, her bright hair still crowned with flowers, reflected in the tall mirror at the end of the room, her pensive face upturned to Gabrielle's.

"Has not the Innocent suffered already for the guilty," said Père Florian. "Who shall say it is unjust?

CHAPTER II.

M. DE SABRAN.

For scarce my life with fancy played
Before I dreamed that pleasant dream ;
Still hither, thither, idly swayed
Like those long mosses in the stream.

PARIS, *October.*

"AND so, my Eulalie, M. de Limeuil has made his appearance. The prince has come at last to the castle of the Sleeping Beauty. Has it changed, I wonder? woke into life? How often I figure you all to myself. Ah, the dear still evenings; my little Eulalie silently working at her endless embroidery, and thinking, no doubt, of the coming knight; thy brother Eugène and Père Florian knitting their brows over their dominoes, and sometimes—yes, sometimes, I wish myself back with you. That is generally after a passage of

arms with M. de Maurepas. Why do I fight with him? On my faith, I cannot tell you. There are not many, I allow, who can compare with him, even here. Not one of the body-guard (alas that they exist no longer) pays a compliment or takes snuff with more finished grace. He is very handsome too, and if I had not been betrothed to him in my cradle, I should doubtless have raved of him. But, as it is, I cannot help quarrelling, and he meets it with such a charming indifference. He makes a superb bow, says something that cuts me—and goes away! The old, wicked Gabrielle, is it not so? Ah yes, child, wickeder than ever, and just now I long for nothing so much as to have thee here and make thee wicked too. Tell M. Eugène so with my best compliments. I can imagine how he will look when he sees this; he reads all thy letters, I know. Never mind; I have a new "distraction," M. le Chevalier de Sabran.

Who is he? I know no more than thou, except that they say he was the best swordsman and wildest sous-lieutenant in the Regiment de Picardie. I do know that he is very charming, that he admires me—a little, and that this displeases M. de Maurepas; all excellent reasons why I should distinguish him at present. He makes an epigram as neatly at M. Dorat-Cubières, but it is whispered that his sympathies are with the Left, in short, all kinds of mysterious things. But this is the more interesting; it gives a flavour, like olives, you understand, after listening to Madame my aunt, or to M. de Maurepas, who only regrets he did not exchange passes with that stiff M. de Lafayette at Versailles the year before last. Enough said. I run on and on, and some day M. Eugène will tell thee to burn my letters unread lest they contaminate thee. Adieu, my Eulalie, and do not forget GABRIELLE."

M. de St Hilaire did not proceed to such extreme measures, though his sister dutifully handed him her friend's letter. He smiled indulgently over it, and remarked,

"M. de Maurepas should marry her out of hand, and take her away. She never saw any one but she tried to torment him. Even you, Eulalie, only you were a willing slave."

She was looking again at her letter.

"I have heard that name, De Sabran, somewhere; I think M. de Limeuil mentioned it," she said, shyly, and looking, not without an effort, at the person in question. He was by no means formidable. A young man looking even younger than his years, with an eager ingenuous face, and, noble though he was, a little of the rusticity of one who had been born and brought up in the Bocage. He and Eulalie de St Hilaire had been affianced as children, had met three years ago, when the boy was eighteen, the girl fifteen,

and now his mother, having sent him to Cennes, and commanded him to fall in love, he had straightway done so. He thought Eulalie charming, while she was perfectly pleased with him, and liked him—next best to Eugène. They were not to be married yet, so the superior powers decreed, and again they were entirely content to wait. I am afraid there was, at present, but a small mixture of romance in their mutual relations, after all. They were but two children playing at being in love; it was to be hoped that some deeper sentiment would arise, or by and by, there might be a disastrous awakening, a common fate enough, but a sad one for all that, and the tragic end of many such pretty comedies. But all this time Eulalie is waiting for an answer, and Victor de Limeuil is ready to give it.

"De Sabran? yes, Mademoiselle is right, without doubt. He is connected with me,

though I never saw him, but we heard of him not long since before he left the Regiment de Picardie, and was at Rennes. He had three affairs of honour there, and killed his man each time. He plays high, though he is but a cadet, and they have ugly stories about that, though no one would dare to whisper it within a day's march of him; but I never heard, no, never, anything so bad as that he was democrat. Perhaps, Mademoiselle your friend is mistaken."

"Nothing more likely," said Eugène; "Mademoiselle Gabrielle does herself no more than justice when she says that her pen runs on."

But Eulalie shook her head.

"He must have changed lately. Some of them may have talked him over. Oh, I hope no one will make Gabrielle democrat."

"You need not fear," said her brother, laughing, but with a tinge of cynicism too;

"Mademoiselle Gabrielle will talk philosophy and freedom with any one who chooses to discuss them with her, provided he can count his sixteen quarterings; but she is 'grande dame' to the tips of her fingers, and could no more be anything else than you, child, could have led the fish-wives to Versailles."

Eulalie pondered for a few minutes, still with a puzzled expression on her young face, before she got up with a little sigh, and dismissed the subject from her mind. They were sitting in the dining-room at Cennes, a large room, with two of its four windows looking into the courtyard, and two giving on to the flagged terrace; through the latter the afternoon sun shone cheerfully, and the autumn flowers in Eulalie's garden held up their bright faces. She walked to the table still covered, and fetching a little basket from a shelf, busied herself in filling it.

"It is for Nanette," she explained, shutting it down triumphantly; "she suffers, and I go to take it to her, if thou wilt let me, Eugene."

Victor de Limeuil looked up with alacrity.

"If Mademoiselle is going to walk, may I be permitted to accompany her and carry her basket?" he said, with a taking mixture of bashfulness and gallantry.

Eulalie coloured and looked at Eugène, who nodded a cordial assent, and she ran off to fetch her hat and capuchin.

Her brother stood at the window and watched the pair pass down the garden alley before he turned back to his books and letters. They looked, those two, like a Dresden shepherd and shepherdess, or a pair of Watteau's courtly Arcadians, as they passed down the pathway in the sunshine. So young, so innocent; life as yet a sealed book to them. They walked on for some

paces in silence, a little shy of each other at first, but Victor happily asked some question about Eugène, a subject which instantly unlocked the sister's tongue, and before they reached their destination they were perfectly happy and confidential. The village, so to speak, was but a meagre collection of houses, very poor, but not half so poor as villages further south and east at that period in France. The condition of things in that district was very different, as would be proved in a few months, and there was really no terribly grinding poverty at Cennes. M. de St Hilaire took care of that, according to his lights; but he could not help a succession of bad harvests, nor keep the wolf from the door in some cases. Children played outside the doors here and there, meagre little bundles of rags, with brown faces and bony hands. Into one of the huts, a little better than its neighbours, Eulalie led her

companion. It was a warm still day, but the sole occupant, a bent but hale old woman, was sitting with her spinning, close to the smouldering sticks on the hearth. She turned a withered brown face and a pair of glittering dark eyes on her visitors as they entered.

"Is it thou, my angel?" she said, her whole face lighting up. "Ah, but it is good to see thee, and it will not be long now."

"Thou art full of thy fancies, Nanette," said Eulalie, laying her little hand on the old woman's. "I come often, is it not so?"

"Yes, but—but I am to go away," whimpered Nanette, lifting her apron to her eyes. "I do not want to go, not I, but Gaston says—"

"Gaston! where does Gaston want to take thee? Thou hast thy home here, and Eugène and me—"

"Ah, yes, so I told him; but he is head-

strong, the wicked child; and he said to me, 'My mother, thou must come and live with me in Angers, that will be better, I will it,' and *I* can say nothing."

"Go and live in Angers? But I shall not see thee half so often as now. It will not be any better, and I think Gaston is very foolish."

"It is very true, and I shall be inconsolable, my cherished," agreed Nanette, with a fresh burst of grief, from which she recovered herself with a sense that she had been wanting in attention to her guests.

"I have made thee sad, miserable that I am. Let us speak of other things. Monsieur will doubtless forgive me graciously."

"This is M. de Limeuil," said Eulalie, shyly, and stopped short. Nanette nodded her head sagely, and looked at Victor with her bright dark eyes.

"Monsieur le Comte is very good to visit

me," she said; "but one will do much for the sake of a young demoiselle, no doubt."

Victor was equal to the occasion. The relations of noble and peasant in the Bocage were very different from those which existed in other parts of France, and he was not unaccustomed to visits like this. He was charmed to go anywhere in mademoiselle's society, he said, but still more so to make Nanette's acquaintance. He strongly combated the notion of the latter's retirement to Angers, representing the distress it would occasion to Mademoiselle, whose feelings every one was bound to consider. Nanette listened to it all, much pleased, but shook her head mournfully at the last argument, while fully admitting its force. "Gaston was inexorable, Gaston did what he pleased," she said; "who was she to combat his will? But she felt she should soon die, separated from her angel, and then might she hope

that M. le Comte would use his powerful influence with Mademoiselle to induce her to visit her (Nanette's) grave occasionally?" At this affecting climax Eulalie was on the verge of tears, which Nanette seeing, she embraced her, overwhelmed her with thanks for the contents of her basket, and said good-bye quite cheerfully. Victor and Eulalie walked away, the former a little amused, the latter wholly indignant.

"It is insufferable," said she, with most unusual asperity; "Eugène lets the people do what they will. Nanette is our vassal. He should not permit Gaston to take her away. But he allowed him to go away without a word, and behold he comes back full of new ideas, and one sees what comes of it."

As they pursued their way, two men came slowly towards them absorbed in conversation. One was a commonplace individual enough, a stalwart Angevin, black-browed,

black-haired, in the garb of a peasant; but his companion was a very different person. He was singularly handsome, and though dressed with almost an affectation of plainness, his hair unpowdered and falling loose, he had the "air noble" in perfection.

"Who are these, Mademoiselle?" asked Victor de Limeuil, with natural curiosity, as the strangers approached.

"That is Gaston Trochu, Nanette's son," whispered Eulalie. "Eugène does not think well of him; he is a market-gardener in Angers now; but I do not know the other, he looks like a gentleman, though he is oddly dressed."

Here they came face to face with the object of their curiosity, and Gaston, as if he had not quite lost the inherent respect for his superiors, made a gesture of respect to Mademoiselle de St Hilaire, though he blushed the next moment, and glanced

sheepishly at his companion, who on his part was intently regarding the young lady and gentleman as they passed. Victor de Limeuil could not forbear looking over his shoulder afterwards.

"It is very strange," he said in a low voice. "I never saw him before, but he is like—so like—some one I have seen, or else I have seen his picture. Where was it?"

Almost at the same moment, the stranger, as if yielding to an uncontrollable impulse, himself turned back, and again confronted the young pair.

"A thousand pardons," he said, in a very soft voice, with a bow that might have been executed by M. de Richelieu, "but have I the honour to address Mademoiselle de St Hilaire?"

"Yes, Monsieur," said Eulalie shyly, and drawing a little nearer to Victor.

"Then I may perhaps be fortunate enough to give Mademoiselle some news of a dear

friend of hers. I had the happiness of seeing Mademoiselle de Thouars a very few days ago in Paris."

"You have seen Gabrielle, Monsieur?" said Eulalie, quickly, "then—." She hesitated, and the stranger hastened to relieve her embarrassment.

"I must present myself," he said, smiling, with another bow, "as Léon de Sabran."

Victor de Limeuil started, and Eulalie made a curtsy in some confusion.

"I have then the honour to be Monsieur's relative," said the former, after a moment's hesitation, with creditable composure for his age, to which remark M. de Sabran responded with ready good will. He accompanied the two on their homeward way forthwith, talking with an easy cordiality which did not fail to produce its effect on two such inexperienced listeners. Eulalie, on her part, too shy to say much, walked on, stealing a furtive glance

now and then at her new acquaintance. This, then, was the redoubtable Chevalier de Sabran, for whose sake Gabrielle thought it worth while to flout M. de Maurepas. What terrible things, too, Victor had hinted with regard to him! He was certainly an ogre, according to Eulalie's simple views, but no one could less resemble one. He had a very gentle, soft voice, surely, and he spoke most sympathetically of Madame de Drou, Gabrielle's aunt; apparently he had a profound admiration for her. Was it three duels Victor mentioned? Here she looked at M. de Sabran. Impossible—Eulalie had no skill in reading character—impossible that those liquid eyes could ever harden, those even white teeth clench doggedly, those soft fingers close in a grasp of steel round his sword-hilt, and drive the blade home relentlessly under his antagonist's guard. She shivered slightly, and gave up that problem. But there was

another to which she found no solution, and yet to which she could not forbear to seek one. What in the world had brought M. de Sabran to Cennes? And still more wonderful, why should he have anything to say to Gaston Trochu? It was utterly puzzling, but M. de Sabran did not offer to solve the mystery, at any rate at present. He showed no disposition to curtail the walk, he did not seem in the least in a hurry, so when they reached the gates under the lime trees, Eulalie felt that hospitality would not suffer her to omit an invitation to enter. She made it falteringly, but he accepted it quite naturally and gracefully, only deferring the visit until the evening. He had left his baggage at the inn, he said, and he would wish to make some change in his dress before he had the honour to attend Mademoiselle and M. le Comte de Saint Hilaire in their own home, and so bowed himself away.

M. de St Hilaire looked a little grave and perplexed when he heard of the encounter, but he patted Eulalie's cheek, and told her she had done quite right. When she had gone away to dress, he asked Victor de Limeuil again what he really knew of the Chevalier. Victor, however, could tell very little. He had never before met his kinsman, and whatever he had heard to his discredit was, after all, not much more than vague rumour. No one knew better than Eugène de St Hilaire how often rumour lied, but he also knew that it just as often spoke the truth.

"Well," he said, "we shall see, but it is very strange that he should come here of all places, and walk about with Gaston Trochu. I suppose Eulalie is quite sure that it *was* Gaston?"

When Père Florian came up that evening for his game of dominoes, and talk on matters

light and deep with the count, he found a strange guest, who had evidently talked himself into popularity with the other three.

M. de Sabran acknowledged with graceful deference the introduction, and then the priest, while joining in the conversation that went on, set himself to examine the stranger carefully, that he might discover if it were a wolf which had crept unawares into this his beloved fold. There was not much to cause apprehension. Léon de Sabran was certainly very charming. His dress was still plain, and to the initiated, on that account, rather alarming, but he was handsome enough to be able to dispense with such adventitious airs. His voice and manner were, as Eulalie thought, "sympathetic," and there was a finished grace about him which made Victor de Limeuil seem rustic in comparison, and even contrasted favourably with St Hilaire's gravity of deportment. Only now and then,

by reason of very close observation, Père Florian thought he could detect a hard metallic glitter in the handsome eyes, when any one differed from him in opinion, and certain lines of cruelty round the mobile mouth. He talked a great deal, and talked well, but it was somewhat difficult to follow the lines of his arguments, and they were apt to leave a slight sense of bewilderment on the minds of his hearers.

"Yes," he said, in response to a question of Eulalie's, "he had had the honour of meeting Mdlle. de Thouars frequently: in fact, he had known Madame de Drou for some years, and on his return to Paris, had lost no time in renewing that acquaintance. Mdlle. de Thouars was, he knew, a dear friend of Mdlle. de St Hilaire. Just so,—that was delightful. Then he might venture to say with what admiration Mdlle. de Thouars had penetrated him." A remark which he

would certainly not have permitted himself to make, had he not perceived at a glance the relations of Victor de Limeuil with the young lady he addressed.

Eulalie flushed up.

"Ah, if Monsieur knew her as I do, my dear Gabrielle—"

"Without doubt my admiration would be redoubled, Mademoiselle would say," he rejoined with a ready smile of comprehension; "every one who sees Mdlle. de Thouars must admire her, but what a pity that M. the Marquis de Maurepas should pester her with such constant (and unwelcome) attentions."

"M. le Chevalier is not, it would seem, aware," said Père Florian, harshly, "that M. de Maurepas is betrothed to her."

M. de Sabran smiled courteously and bowed slightly.

"I have heard something of an old contract, but that sort of thing is out of fashion

now, and Mdlle. Gabrielle appears to me unlikely to submit to such a bond against her will."

"How do you know that it is against her will, Monsieur?" said Eugène.

De Sabran shrugged his shoulders.

"How does one know anything with regard to even the most charming of the sex? I infer from Mademoiselle's evident impatience that M. de Maurepas fatigues her. Believe me, M. le Comte, the chain that binds her is a very slight one, and she needs but little resolution to break the last link."

Victor de Limeuil glanced uneasily at Eulalie to see what effect this rank heresy had upon her, and she, on her part, felt at least equal dismay. What ideas were these? Assuredly Gabrielle could not have imbibed them.

The priest was looking steadily at M. de Sabran, who must have been uncon-

scious of the fact, being apparently absorbed in the contemplation of the picture of the late Count de St Hilaire on the wall opposite.

"I know Gabrielle de Thouars," said Père Florian, in his usual incisive tone, "and I do not think so ill of her as Monsieur's opinion would imply."

M. de Sabran removed his eyes reluctantly from the picture.

"Mon père, you mistake. I have already had the honour to express my profound admiration for Mdlle. de Thouars. How, then, could I imply the contrary?"

"By assuming that she wishes, without adequate reasons, to set aside a solemn contract," rejoined the priest, whereat the chevalier simply lifted his eyebrows and smiled. His host, as the person best calculated to effect a diversion, led the conversation away

from Gabrielle, seeing she was likely to prove a *casus belli.*

"Did Monsieur know this country well? Should he make a long stay in the neighbourhood?" Eulalie listened eagerly for the answer, as a solution to the mystery which was puzzling her. No, M. de Sabran knew little of it, but it appeared charming; he was merely passing through, but found himself under the necessity of remaining for the night in the village. He had walked out to enjoy the scenery, and had fallen in with an intelligent person, a peasant or mechanic apparently, who was directing him on his way, when he had the felicity to meet Mademoiselle.

Mademoiselle being a simple-minded young person, thought it all very natural, though she felt she scarcely appreciated the advantages of a walk with Gaston Trochu. She wondered why Eugène looked grave,

and Père Florian too, but then *he* generally did, now, so that did not count for much.

"Your people here seem happy, M. le Comte," said the visitor.

"I hope so," said St Hilaire, the shade deepening on his face, "but they are very poor, and poverty is hard to bear. One can do so little in these days—"

"Eh, but what matter, it is but a few canaille after all," and here M. de Sabran looked full into his host's face.

"Monsieur, I have never looked on them as such," said Eugène, proudly, "what other seigneurs may be I do not know. Here we strive to do justly by our vassals; if we fail, we fail."

"Yes, *you* have done your best," said Père Florian, gently, "if it were so all over France —but past generations have sowed the wind, and who shall say what the harvest of the whirlwind shall be?"

Just then M. de Sabran rose to take leave. He must pursue his journey early next day, he said, and therefore must, though penetrated with regret, decline M. le Comte's hospitality for the night.

Eulalie found her tongue on his departure.

"But he is charming, is he not, Eugène?" she said eagerly, a little to Victor's discomfiture. "Why do you look so grave, my brother? Père Florian, is not M. de Sabran delightful?"

Père Florian smiled indulgently at her.

"Keep thy innocent faith, my daughter," he said; "it is far better to see only the sheep, where the sheep's clothing is, than to detect the wolf's fangs beneath;" and with a "peace be with you," he too went away.

"I never can understand the good father," said Eulalie, to herself, despairingly, as she went to bed; "why should he compare M. de Sabran to a wolf, I wonder."

CHAPTER III.

PAINT AND POWDER.

> Quit the stiff garb of serious sense,
> And wear a gay impertinence,
> Nor think, nor speak with any pains,
> But lay on Fancy's neck the reins.

Madame la Comtesse de Drou had a reception. A small one, for society, as Madame understood the word, had become limited in Paris; but then there were hardly any of her guests who could not count back their half-score of descents. Madame de Drou herself was a specimen of a class long since extinct. A few like her survived until the Restoration, looking on at the brief pageant of the first empire, with haughty, contemptuous eyes; clinging fondly to the traditions of their youth, to an order of things for ever

buried and forgotten, with all the more tenacity for that very reason. Madame de Drou had been a beauty in her day, and had made a sensation on her arrival from her convent school, where she collected the alms in the royal chapel, without missing one curtsy, or evincing the slightest embarrassment.

Nevertheless, when she married, which was immediately, she had been entirely submissive, and had manifested no objection to being buried in the country, for the late count had an unaccountable fancy that way. Madame had appeared at court again on her widowhood, but did not altogether approve of what she saw there. No doubt, things were much better than in the late King's time, but Madame looked doubtfully on her Majesty's taste for wearing muslin frocks and milking the cows, and surely it was a pity that the most Christian King should soil

and oil his royal fingers over locks and bolts quite so much.

She and Madame de Noailles shook their heads together sometimes, but they both loved the king and queen devotedly, and never allowed any one else to utter a syllable in disparagement of their majesties' favourite pursuits.

Madame is at present sitting upright near the fire, coffee-cup in hand, stately as a towering powdered "head," Malines lace, and the consciousness of Montmorency blood can make her, talking to Madame de Brancas and two or three more near her. Her salon is bright with wax candles which burn in the gilded girandoles on the walls, and the candlesticks on the buhl tables scattered about the room, while the light is absorbed in the velvet curtains hanging before the tall windows, after falling on two or three pictures on the walls between them. A portrait by Mignard

of some fair Montmorency of the days of the great Louis, a pastel by La Tour, and so on. Madame has a pretty taste in art, and the fan that shades her face from the fire was painted by Watteau.

At the other side of the room stands Gabrielle de Thouars, attired in much the same fashion as her aunt, powder, toupée, and all; for Madame de Drou disapproves of the new fashions as much for the young as for the old.

Mdlle. de Thouars looks very handsome, handsomer, perhaps, than in the old garden at Cennes, where she teased Eulalie de St Hilaire, and made wreaths for her, by turns; yet the expression of her face is hardly as sweet. A little disdainful, a little weary, and there is now and then a restless glance at one end of the room; but she keeps up the ball of conversation gallantly, with a very elegantly dressed man, whose somewhat

effeminate beauty is strangely at variance with a certain reckless daring of expression.

"Mademoiselle is too cruel," he is saying; "what are we poor poets to do if we have not the privilege of warning beauty of its dangerous powers?"

"Only that you are a little too late, Monsieur," says Gabrielle. "Wherever beauty exists, I will venture to say its possessor is fully aware of it."

"But not of its power. Do not say so, Mademoiselle, or you will rob your sex of one of its greatest charms, that of tenderness."

Gabrielle laughs.

"Do you hear this, Mesdames?" she says. "M. Dorat-Cubières accuses us of too much tenderness. See what it is to be a poet."

"It is the privilege of a poet to draw on his imagination, is it not?" says a gentleman at the other side of the room in a very soft measured voice. M. le Marquis

de Maurepas is leaning back in a deep easy chair, and one would scarcely suppose him to have been much interested in the conversation hitherto. His face is an exceedingly refined one, less regularly handsome perhaps than M. de Sabran's, for instance, if one saw them together, yet attractive in its own way, and one or two people would tell you, more fascinating. It is carefully schooled to an expression of lazy and somewhat supercilious indifference—schooled, because when he chooses to lift those handsome eyes, there is a certain latent fire in them, which tells of something beneath that languid, critical exterior, if one knew how to get at it. He does not take the trouble to raise the eyes in question at this moment, but contemplates placidly the shapely foot which, crossed on his knee, is within range of his vision, and thus does not see the angry flush which comes, oddly enough, over Mdlle. de

Thouar's face as she answers with unaccountable asperity,

"Is it also the privilege solely of a poet to pay graceful compliments?"

"Only one of them," says M. de Maurepas, sweetly, "M. Dorat-Cubières can claim so many,"—this with such a graceful inclination of the head that the poet could find no pretext for offence, even had he wished to do so.

M. de Maurepas had the worst possible opinion of Dorat-Cubières himself, and a not much better one of his verses, though society, as a rule, raved of them. De Maurepas never forgot that two years back the poet had tied on a red sash to follow the victorious columns in the attack on the Bastile, and had then called himself "citizen and soldier." He altogether disapproved of Madame de Drou's receiving the offender; but Madame, much as she hated the Jacobins, was no more consistent than the rest of her kind. Dorat-

Cubières was a spoilt favourite, the darling of society, and doubtless had repented him of his errors, in spite of what was still said of him. Besides, he was a poet, and therefore not accountable for his actions like other people. So she stretched a point and admitted him. There he was, scented, powdered, talking sentiment by the yard, just as if there had never been a terrible day in July, which had seen him in a whirl of dust and blood, of furies and crazy patriots; and as if he had not stood by when De Launay was slaughtered outside the gates he had tried to defend. Now M. de Maurepas, by way of contrast, had belonged to the gardes-du-corp, only lately disbanded, and his recollections led him to a certain night, also two years back, when this corps feasted the National Guard and the Regiment de Flandre at Versailles, when the king and queen came among them, and all was a mist of loyalty, white

cockades, and strains of "O Richard, O mon roi!"

"Is it true," says Madame de Drou, "that Roland de Platière had a reception last night?"

"Madame Roland had," says Dorat-Cubières laughing.

"Probably an admirable woman," remarks De Maurepas, "but how fatiguing."

"Yes," responds the poet, "she has not the art of conversation, but declamation—my faith, how she declaims!"

"What would you have?" says Gabrielle. "She is bourgeoise — she must achieve notoriety somehow."

"That is a very easy task in these days," says De Maurepas. "A little Plutarch, much assurance, and there is your heroine ready-made."

"They say," pursues Madame de Drou, holding up her hands, "that this M. Roland

is likely to come into power. Heavens! what a reflection! He was but a little while ago inspector of fabrics at Lyons, and it was only yesterday that he went to Court without buckles. Figure to yourselves, Mesdames, strings in his shoes!"

"M. de Sabran frequents Madame Roland's salon," says Dorat-Cubières, with a covert glance at Gabrielle, who pretends not to hear, but he proceeds:—"Many people say they are tarred with the same feather. M. de Sabran's sentiments seem to incline towards the democracy, I hear."

"As yours did once, Monsieur," says Gabrielle with a laugh, and a curtsy that takes off the bitterness of her retort, though there is a dangerous sparkle in her grey eyes.

"Mademoiselle is correct, as she always is," says the poet; "but I would venture to observe that Madame Roland's sentiments, and those of her friends, are other than the

fiery impulse which animated that deplorable outbreak in which I was so unfortunate as to be concerned."

"The difference between the Gironde and the Montagne," says Gabrielle maliciously, though in a low voice.

Dorat-Cubières tries to answer composedly, but his voice shakes with spite and confusion; and, poet and man of gallantry as he is, he would like nothing better than to take Mdlle. de Thouars by her slender white throat there and then, and beat her till she is black and blue. He harps on now at the name which has sown such mischievous seed.

"M. de Sabran has been absent for some weeks, I hear," he says. "Do you know where he is, Mademoiselle?"

"M. de Sabran does not favour me with an account of all his movements," says Gabrielle pettishly. "I did not even know that he had not come back."

"That is very strange," says her tormentor. "What can lead him to be so long absent at such a time, when there must be so much to enchain him here? I will endeavour to find out where he is if you, Mademoiselle, will empower me."

"Not on any account, Monsieur," says Gabrielle, exasperated. "I do not think any of us is sufficiently impressed by this wonderful piece of news to wish that you should fatigue yourself so far. When M. de Sabran is tired of the provinces, I have no doubt he will return to Paris."

As she speaks De Maurepas' eyes are, for once, fixed on her handsome, disdainful face, but before she has well finished he rises and moves languidly to the fire-place, where he takes up an idle, desultory conversation with Madame de Drou and the circle which surrounds her.

Gabrielle sees the movement, but not the

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intent gaze which preceded it, and an offended flush rises on her face as she turns her back alike on the group near the fire and the offending poet, and begins to talk to some one else.

Nevertheless, when every one has departed, and she goes up to her room, she annoys and surprises herself by bursting into tears, though she stoutly maintains she does not know why.

"I am like Eulalie, poor little soul," she says snappishly to her own reflection in the glass, "who cries if she sees a dead mouse." It is weakness, it is an attack of the nerves, it is anything and everything but the Marquis de Maurepas. All the same, Gabrielle's last remark to herself, as she lays her head on the pillow, is, "I hate him;" but probably the weather has affected her, and she has a headache.

CHAPTER IV.

ON SERVICE.

Upon a great adventure he was bond,
That greatest Gloriana to him gave
(That greatest, glorious Queene of Faery-lond),
To win him worshippe and her grace to have.

"BABETTE, say to Mademoiselle that I request her presence at her earliest convenience," thus Madame de Drou, thoughtfully stirring her chocolate, the next day. She had not, in her own superior fashion, been altogether unobservant of the by-play of last night, and she thought matters ought to come to a crisis.

Gabrielle showed a becoming alacrity in obeying her aunt's summons, and came forthwith; fresh, smiling, having overcome, per-

haps forgotten, her uncomfortable cogitations of the previous night.

"Madame my aunt, you are well, I trust?" she said, kissing the old lady's hand. "Nothing is amiss?"

"I wish to speak to you seriously, Gabrielle; have the goodness to sit down and attend."

Gabrielle made a little grimace unobserved, but got a low stool and placed herself demurely, with her back to the light.

"Many years ago," began Madame, who was apt to become didactic when she wished to be impressive, "my beloved brother, and your deplored and sainted mother, made the agreement with M. the late Marquis de Maurepas that you should marry his son when both were grown up. That period has now arrived. Not long ago you signified your acquiescence in the arrangement. Now it only remains to carry into effect the wishes of the lamented deceased."

"But Madame," said Gabrielle, when her aunt had wound up her flowing periods, "must the wishes of the deceased always supersede those of the living?" this with a suspicion of laughter in her voice.

"I fail to comprehend you," said Madame de Drou, with added dignity; "for my part I should always consider them paramount. But, putting that question aside, I again remark that, a few months ago, when I reminded you of the contract, you made no objection."

"But M. the Marquis—perhaps he is not equally submissive?"

"Even before I spoke to you," rejoined Madame, "M. de Maurepas confided to me his willingness, I should say his eager desire, to carry his father's wishes into effect. He is quite conscious," pursued Madame, drawing herself up, "that in marrying you, he not only marries a De Thouars, though that is

enough, even for a De Maurepas; but a Montmorency, a Rohan, a —."

"So, with all these inestimable advantages, M. de Maurepas is willing to take the insignificant person tacked on to them," said Gabrielle, in a tone that struggled between amusement and indignation; "it is satisfactory to be certain of it, for one would never divine it from his manner."

"His manner is perfect," said her aunt, angrily; "I do not know what more you would have, unless the insipid chatter of M. de Sabran, whom I suspect to be deeply tainted with Jacobinism, in spite of his blood, which is undoubted. You would not have M. de Maurepas excite himself in the same way?"

"Not for worlds," said Gabrielle, quickly; "it would be far too much to expect M. de Maurepas to excite himself about anything, least of all, about *me*."

From the position in which she sat, the angry flush that mounted to her face escaped her aunt, who proceeded calmly.

"You speak like a child; the question is of your marriage. It should be before long, and there is nothing at present, as far as I can see, to prevent it. Your portion certainly is not large, but—"

"Madame," interrupted Gabrielle, who seemed to have made up her mind during her aunt's last deliberate speech, "permit me to ask you to let this matter rest—at least for a time. It seems to me that M. the Marquis should again address himself to you —or me—before we can move with dignity."

"You, Gabrielle," retorted Madame, "are scarcely so good a judge of dignity as I, or of what is fitting, as you prove by the mere suggestion of M. de Maurepas addressing himself to you."

"It may be so, Madame," said Gabrielle,

getting up, "but unless he does, I decline to consider the question altogether," and with a sweeping curtsy Mademoiselle sailed out of the room, leaving her aunt to sigh over this last act of rank insubordination, and to class it as one of the many signs of the degeneracy of the times.

Now Gabrielle had not been quite sincere. M. de Maurepas *had* declared himself to her personally a few months back, and she had then given no answer or an evasive one. She liked to have De Sabran and others at her feet; she hated to be bound in any way, though in her heart of hearts she knew that she considered no one equal to Raoul de Maurepas. But she chose to consider that he conducted the siege too languidly, and his gentle imperturbability chafed, while it fascinated her against her will; and it irritated her that her flirtations with the butterflies who hovered round her, never seemed to

provoke him into the shadow of a remonstrance. She never appeared able to rouse in him any emotion, but all her arts, her wit, and her beauty, seemed to recoil like headless arrows from the shield of his placid self-possession; and above all things, Gabrielle dearly loved power. For this reason De Sabran's evident devotion conveyed the most subtle flattery to her mind. Surely M. de Maurepas could not care so very much about her or he would take more pains to win her. So she said to herself, impressively, over and over again; yet in spite of it all, in reviewing her late interview with her aunt, it was provoking to find that she was much more angry with herself than with any one else.

She went out for some fresh air in the course of the day, Babette in attendance; but the change of scene and stir of life round her did not go far to mend matters, nor ameliorate her feelings of discontent. Once,

however, she forgot herself and her own trivial and self-inflicted troubles. That was when a carriage passed her slowly, and she recognised, with a low curtsy, the face of the most famous, and perhaps the most sorrowful, woman in France. What were her poor perplexities, the vagaries of M. de Maurepas, the sighs of M. de Sabran, to the tangle of anxiety, pain, and bewilderment seething under that pale brow. Although the powder on her hair only served to mask the rapidly whitening tresses, once so bright, although care had ploughed furrows on the white forehead, and hollowed those imperial eyes, yet Marie Antoinette of Lorraine had not yet lost the stately carriage which had marked her in the plenitude of her splendour, her beauty, and her power. Nay, she never did lose it, but, when the bitter end came, she fronted Fouquier-Tinville, and mounted the steps of the guillotine with the same lofty

grace which had clothed her when she entered Strasbourg, the bride of the Dauphin, amidst the frantic enthusiasm of France, only eighteen years before.

Just as Gabrielle de Thouars performed her obeisance, and the Queen bowed her fair head, with the faint, sad smile, which was all she could ever summon now, a woman came up behind, and paused for an instant.

"Ah, la belle Bourbonnaise," she said, in a clear, loud voice, "art thou there, thou? I shall see thee lower yet, some day, infâme."

The Queen must have heard it, for her coach-window was open, but the pale face gave no sign of intelligence, and she did not even avert her eyes. Had it come to this, had constant suffering so blunted feeling, that even this petty insult was powerless to sting?

Gabrielle started back with a faint exclamation of horror, and as the royal carriage

passed on, she turned with blazing eyes on the speaker.

This was a sufficiently remarkable person. A tall handsome woman, very neatly dressed, she might have passed for the wife or sister of an inferior tradesman or mechanic; but it did not need the red sash round her waist to tell that she was possessed of a decided individuality of her own.

She met Gabrielle's gaze of scorn and indignation quite calmly and collectedly, with at least an equal amount of pride expressed in her own dark eyes.

"Well, Mademoiselle," she said, "I meant to say it. What! there is a day of expiation coming for such as *thee* too, as well as for *her*."

"It is shameful," said Gabrielle hotly, that this should be allowed—should be possible. Permit me to pass," she added haughtily, for the other barred her road with a certain reck-

less amusement in her face, and Babette was far too frightened to be of any use.

"A little instruction would be of great service to thee," said the stranger, moving, however, carelessly on one side, "if only to teach thee not to look with such scorn on a daughter of the People. When we meet again, we shall remember each other. I am Philippine Drouet."

Gabrielle made no answer, but she had her own share of courage, and did not refrain from a last glance, in which she infused all the horror and contempt of which she was capable, as she walked swiftly away.

She had heard, for it was then well known, the terrible name of her, who, a mere bourgeoise maiden, like so many others of her time, flung herself into the vortex of public excitement, and who, by means of her fatal beauty, her wild enthusiasm, and tameless ferocity had earned a more sinister fame than those who followed her.

They were poles asunder, those two, the demoiselle with her sixteen quarterings, her pride of blood, her reserve of race and education ; and the daughter of the people, inflamed with mad hatred against order ; order so long abused, so soon to be swept away ; a hatred that would only too easily find its vent in the coming storm. Yet in two qualities they were alike : their courage and their pride. Philippine herself recognised that kinship of spirit as she stood for a few seconds watching Mdlle. de Thouars' receding figure, which lost no whit of its collected grace in the rapid steps which bore it away.

" She has a bold heart, that one," she said to herself ; " I did not think there was one aristocrat of them all, could have looked me down like that, except the Austrian, and *she* was cool enough that day at Versailles. Well, we should see how either would look if I were holding her in one hand, and my

knife at her throat in the other;" and so saying, she too went her way.

Gabrielle, still trembling and excited from her encounter, was turning into the Hôtel Drou, when the Marquis de Maurepas came up from the opposite direction. He bowed profoundly as they met, and spoke in his usual imperturbable manner.

"May I be permitted to wait on Madame your aunt?" he said.

"Assuredly, M. le Marquis," said Gabrielle, stiffly, for she felt her colour coming and going with an aggravating recollection of her aunt's admonitions, and an unreasonable conviction that M. de Maurepas must also be aware of it.

The whole time he remained, which was not long, she was in a fever of excitement; of terror lest he and Madame de Drou should fall to discussing the question of the marriage, and then, though she would not own it

to herself, of perverse anger because he had *not* approached the subject. But he talked the merest platitudes in his ordinary fatigued fashion, until there arrived two or three visitors, and the opportunity was lost for the present, if he had ever intended to take advantage of it. Gabrielle had been, for her, unusually silent, but now that she conceived she was safe, she began to chatter with more than her usual volubility. Presently she related her encounter of that afternoon, at which all present held up their hands and eyes, except M. de Maurepas.

"Mademoiselle Drouet is a very singular person," he remarked, shrugging his shoulders. "I only once had the honour of seeing her, and that was under circumstances calculated to display her style of eloquence to the best advantage."

"And where was that?" asked Madame de Drou.

"It was at Versailles," he answered carelessly.

Gabrielle knew, if her aunt had forgotten, that, on that terrible October day, when the crowds from Paris, mad for rapine and blood, poured into the vast palace of the great Louis, Raoul de Maurepas, then of the body-guard, was there, and that it was no fault of his that he had not shared the fate of the faithful two, who were slaughtered on the staircase of the Queen's apartments. But, in her irritation, she put away the recollection from her mind to-night. Why was he always so cool, so unemotional? she thought, angrily.

"Ah, she was horrible; I have no patience to think of her," she said sharply; "you are too much of a philosopher, M. le Marquis."

"Perhaps no, perhaps yes," he said with an indolent smile; "if so, I follow the fashion, and it saves so much trouble, Mademoiselle."

"Even when it is a bad fashion," she persisted. "I think philosophy is out of place now."

"That is a question I shall have to study for the present," he said, "as I contemplate an absence of some time from Paris."

Gabrielle could not repress a slight start of surprise, neither, to her annoyance, could she keep the blood from mounting to her forehead, but she said nothing. Madame de Drou looked up.

"Going away, M. le Marquis? But we shall be inconsolable. Is not this a sudden resolution?" And as she spoke, she could not forbear a rapid inquisitive glance at her niece. De Maurepas did not look up.

"A mere whim, of course, Madame, desire of travelling, too much philosophy; besides, it is very dull here, is it not Mademoiselle?" and here he did lift his eyes, and glanced at Gabrielle, who, angry, offended, and a little ashamed, chose to detect an undertone of sarcasm in his quiet words. He is playing fast and loose, the aunt must have

told him that I was all ready for him; he despises me, and shows that he does so; were the thoughts that ran through her mind as she sat, opening and shutting her fan with petulant snaps that Mr Spectator certainly would never have approved. At last, M. de Maurepas rose to take his leave.

"Shall we not then see you before you start?" asked Madame de Drou, still infinitely puzzled.

"I fear not, Madame," he said; "I trust not to prolong my stay indefinitely, but a little inquisition into my affairs down in Auvergne is necessary. You do not believe that any less cogent reason could take me away," he added, as he bowed over Madame's slender, jewelled hand.

Gabrielle got up, and walking to the other side of the room, began turning over the leaves of one of the books on a little gilded table with restless, impatient fingers. She

felt unreasonably provoked to see him bandying idle compliments with the group by the fire. He had—yes, he had humiliated her; the leaves of the book fluttered still faster; she was longing that he would go, and yet half hoping that he might remain. He crossed the room gently and deliberately, and stopped before her, looking now full into her face. It seemed to her as if he compelled her glance.

"Mademoiselle," he said, his low, soft voice lower even than usual, "I owe it to you to explain the true object of my journey, which has only become known to myself to-day. I go on a secret mission from the Queen. It is a great honour—Mademoiselle will remember that I trust *all* to her in revealing this much. Adieu." He kissed her hand, and was gone. Gabrielle stood still where he had left her, mechanically fingering her book, until recalled to herself by the necessity of

saying good-bye to her aunt's friends, and there she waited, looking down abstractedly into the bright wood fire, while Madame addressed her querulous remarks to her.

"Very strange, very strange indeed; how can it be necessary for him to go now? Besides, he should have mentioned it before, and discussed these affairs with me. Gabrielle, do you not hear? Is it not strange?"

"Very strange," said Gabrielle, in the absent voice of one who has understood nothing which has been said to her. "Madame, will you permit me to say good-night? I am very tired, and—and my head aches?"

Ah yes, she would have liked to call him back now, to say that she was—well—sorry for being so cross; that she was proud of his selection as a messenger from the Sovereign they were all so ready to die for; that she was sure none worthier ever did the behest of a Queen since Thibault of Champagne

served Blanche of Castile so nobly; that—oh, there were a hundred things she could have said, had she only known. But he might not be back for ages, and she did not in the least know where he was going—it was a secret mission, so of course he could not tell her that, she knew; but it was all a cruel blow, and if Mademoiselle de Thouars had cried the night before, she cried much harder now. She heard hour after hour strike from the little Louis Quatorze clock on her table, as she lay awake and miserable, wondering, with a remorseful and sore heart, if M. de Maurepas was thinking of her, and if he would ever come back again.

Her feelings of contrition would have been intensified, could she have been present at a scene which was enacted a few hours earlier on that same day. Standing before a table, in one of the Queen's apartments in the Tuileries, was the Marquis de Maurepas.

The King was sitting by the table, while at the other side stood Marie Antoinette, a letter in her hand, which she looked over and rapidly folded. Louis XVI. sat silently looking on, the now habitual expression of pained perplexity shadowing his broad face; and it was the Queen who managed the affair.

She held out the letter as soon as the King had sealed it.

"M. le Marquis, we trust you."

As Raoul de Maurepas took the letter, kneeling, from the fair soft hand, so thin, alas, already, he looked up with something of the same expression in his face as Gabrielle de Thouars noticed a few hours later when he bade her farewell; something of the same expression with which George Douglas must have said farewell to home and kindred, and steered the boat that carried Mary Stuart to freedom, or with which the chivalrous ancestor of the same Douglas must have carried

forth the heart of Bruce, on the pilgrimage that was never to be fulfilled. But he made no scene, uttered no protestations.

"I am most unworthy of such an honour, Madame," he said simply, "but I will try to deserve it. One can always die, at least."

CHAPTER V.

THE GATHERING OF THE WIND.

> A small black ominous spot far in the distance,
> It spread—and spread.

Eulalie de St Hilaire is sitting alone in the salle at Cennes. The sunlight streams cheerfully in upon her through the window near. She can hear a distant chorus of cocks and hens, but that is all the company she has. Victor de Limeuil has gone away again, back to his own home in the west, where he will remain for the present in dutiful attendance on Madame his mother, to whom he is under orders. He and Eulalie will not be married yet—not for an indefinite time, it appears. Eulalie bears his departure very philosophically; it is right that he

should go, you see—an arrangement; therefore, she never dreams of disputing the propriety or advisability of the matter. She looked a little grave, to be sure, when the horses passed down under the lime trees, but twenty minutes afterwards she could lift as unruffled a smile as ever to Eugène. *He* is not gone too, and that means a good deal to Eulalie. Eugène himself is not quite satisfied. Is it after all the best thing for the child? To be sure Victor de Limeuil is everything that could be desired, and he would appear to be genuinely attached, but he does not seem to have made any deep impression on Eulalie's heart, which one would suppose soft enough in all conscience. It is perplexing, certainly. M. de St Hilaire has seen enough of loveless marriages, and he has never forgotten a wild mirk evening in January, ten years ago, when his mother, a widow, lay dying. He knelt by her, his arm

round little Eulalie, who clung frightened to him; and their mother, the memory of her own sorrowful life, and perhaps of some long crushed hope, strong upon her, bade him shield his sister from a like fate. "Find her a fitting marriage, Eugène; one who loves her, one whom she can love, or it would be better for her to be lying here." He had promised this, and he had tried hard to keep his promise. All the love, all the sentiment of his life had been absorbed into that one protecting affection for his sister, an affection much more like that of a mother for an only child, than the ordinary matter-of-course fraternal instinct. He had done his best according to his lights in this betrothal, but—was it all a mistake? Eugène de St Hilaire, with all his strength of will and real decision of character, was a man who suffered from an almost morbid distrust of his own judgment, at times; born of a strained conscientious-

ness, and this was of course a fruitful source of regret. He could not leave consequences to take care of themselves, even when he knew the actions from which they sprang to be right. As was perhaps natural in such a temperament, he had far less distrust of others than of himself, and, beyond that one absorbing passion of affection for his sister, the one aim of his life was the redress of all grievances within his power. The secluded life he led, and indifferent health, had increased the contemplative bent of his mind; but its practical side had been kept alive by Père Florian's lofty enthusiasm acting on his own sense of right. Nine nobles out of ten in France would have denounced him, with a contemptuous gesture, as an insane dreamer; the King himself would probably have recognized in him a kindred soul, with rather more power and opportunity than himself.

Eulalie's work lies on her lap; but she is at present reading one of Gabrielle de Thouars' voluminous epistles. The latter regards her friend, perhaps, as a sort of safety-valve. At any rate, she tells her rather more of her innermost thoughts and feelings than anyone else, for, careless of tongue as Mdlle. de Thouars appears to be, she has plenty of reserve where she chooses to have concealment.

"So M. de Sabran has gone, no one knows whither, since he descended on you all so oddly, and so has M. de Maurepas, and joy be with them both," writes Gabrielle. "You would say, only that you are always good natured, that I am rightly served for my vanity. Apparently my society is not so indispensable to these messieurs as one expected. Never mind, I can do without them. I wish, oh, how I wish, that I could wake up some morning and find myself at

Cennes, or, rather, that I could sleep there and never dream. I dream too much, I think, sometimes, and then the awakening is unpleasant. Things look strange here in Paris. Many of our friends have gone. They depart quietly, without leave-taking, and one finds it out by degrees. However, Madame my aunt says nothing of such a step, and I believe nothing will take her away. We waited on her Majesty yesterday. Child, how the Court has changed—how many faces one misses, and above all, how *she* has altered. It is now three years since I made my first curtsy at Versailles, and in that time what a change! One admires her still, but it is not what used to be. I wonder, are we on the eve of some terrible event? Nay, are we already involved, ignorantly, and approaching the crisis? If so, how blind are many whom I see round us. Ah, well, if one can do nothing, perhaps it is

better to be blind; but you are happier than I, my Eulalie."

Mademoiselle de St Hilaire, a tranquil figure, sat poring over her letter in the window. The watery sunshine of the showery day slanted in on her fair hair and great cap, as she bent her young head with an infinitely puzzled face. She made a pretty little picture, such as Greuze might have loved to paint, only that there was far more real unconsciousness about her attitude than that great master would have altogether appreciated. It was a pity, however, that Victor de Limeuil could not see her. She folded up the letter with a little sigh.

"I cannot quite understand what Gabrielle means," she said to herself, "but I am afraid she is unhappy. I wish she were here again, and she seems to long for it too, and yet she is beautiful, and has so much admiration, that

it is strange. I suppose she really misses M. de Maurepas after all, and I wonder where M. de Sabran went after he was here, and we saw him with Gaston. That reminds me, I must go and see Nanette. The poor one must be longing for me." She got up and collected her work with a grave face, for a little pang of regret crossed her mind, at the recollection of her last visit to Nanette, and of her companion on that occasion; but it was not poignant enough to leave a lasting sting, and she had almost forgotten it by the time the door opened, and M. le Curé put his face into the room.

"Where is the Count?" he asked, his quick eyes travelling round in search of their object.

"Good day, my father," said Eulalie, "I do not know where he is, but he cannot be far off."

"I should like to find him," said the priest,

coming in, "and you—are you going out, my daughter?"

"I am going to see the poor Nanette. She was suffering the last time; I have not been for some time, and it cheers her."

"Then I may spare you the trouble," said Père Florian. "Nanette is gone."

"Gone, really gone?" cried Eulalie; "then that wicked Gaston—"

"Ah, you knew, then?" he rejoined. "Yes, Gaston has taken her off to Angers—"

"Then I am sure it was against her will."

"So it was, but what could she do? Gaston was resolved. As a lad, he was idle and improvident; as a man, he is a very firebrand of evil. His wife is, as I hear, for she is not of this country, worse still, and in a town like Angers such noxious weeds grow rank."

"I am so sorry," the tears were standing in Eulalie's eyes. "Nanette was fond of me

always, and now I cannot go and see her; at least, it will be very seldom."

The priest looked at her thoughtfully.

"Poor child," he said at last, "this is one of the least of the sorrows the coming time is bringing you. See, here comes thy brother."

As M. de St Hilaire came in, Père Florian took his arm and led him away.

Eulalie stood still at the window; her hands hanging down, loosely clasped before her, looking into the garden.

There was the flagged path down which she and Victor had walked on their way to visit Nanette a week or two back. Close beneath the window was the spot where Gabrielle de Thouars had sat, putting flowers into her hair, on a golden summer evening not so long ago. Down beyond the lime trees, almost leafless now, she could just see the well in the village street, which she had passed with M. de Sabran. Eulalie was

beginning to connect familiar spots with those who had peopled them, as those do whose quiet uneventful lives are beginning to be crossed by unaccustomed shadows. The sunlight went out suddenly, clouds came drifting overhead, and a shower fell sharply. The leaves yet clinging to their stems, which, a minute back, had flamed in orange and gold and bronze, turned dull under the veil of the storm, and many fluttered to the ground.

"M. le Curé talks as if sad times were coming. Eugène looks worn. Gabrielle writes in the same way," she thought. "Are they all in the right, I wonder? Perhaps we shall have to suffer for conscience sake like the holy martyrs. I do not think I could bear much unless Eugène were with me. I sometimes think he must be like the blessed Saint Sebastian. He could endure, I know, but I—"

The shower had passed over quickly. The sun broke out again, and the dripping leaves shone bright, and diamonds of raindrops sparkled on them. Far away the sunlight smote on the twin towers of the Cathedral of Saint Maurice, watching over Angers; and past the ruined castle of Philip Augustus, the Maine flowed down to meet the Loire at Cæsar's Bridge; while here and there a sparkle in the valley showed the course of the great river. In the village near at hand, cheerful sounds of life seemed to wake again; a woman with a red cap came out to the well.

Eulalie, at the château window, turned away with a sigh of relief, as if the end of the shower were really a fortunate omen. "Perhaps nothing very bad will happen after all," she said aloud. "I will write to the dear Gabrielle soon, and Angers is not so far off. I can still go and see Nanette sometimes." If

her spirits were soon depressed, they were as quickly elevated, and with no more reason; but she was only eighteen, and she had that illimitable inheritance of hope, which is ours for so short a time. I do not think we ever realize while we have it, the value of that boundless possession, and when it is gone it never comes again. It was an armour of proof *once*, but we must toil on now without it, bruised and weary, and stung with remembrance.

Eulalie did not know how long M. le Curé staid talking to Eugène, nor with what an uneasy face the latter bade his guest good-bye, and watched the thin black figure walking with long swift strides along the uneven, muddy road. He did not say much when he came back to the house; but he spent some hours in writing letters, and when Eulalie, in the evening, gave him, according to custom, all the news of the day, he

scarcely seemed to attend to her at first. When he did rouse himself to respond, it was when she began to discuss Nanette's departure, but he dismissed that subject with fewer words than she expected.

BOOK II.—STORM.

CHAPTER VI.

"THE WAY OF THE CROSS."

> And against the face
> Of death and fiercest dangers, durst with brave
> And sober pace march on to meet a grave.—
> *Crashaw.*

THE world is nine months older since Victor de Limeuil went away from Cennes in the russet autumn-tide. In Paris, the rush of events has been such as to bewilder those who, passive in the flow of the torrent, are carried on in the headlong race which is bearing France to the era of her deepest degradation. The tempest that has been gathering so long all around the horizon is rolling up now, cloud on cloud, black and lowering and dangerous. The Queen can no longer drive out from fear of insult, nay,

neither she nor Madame Elisabeth dare look from the windows, lest they should be seen by the loiterers on the Terrace des Feuillants. One night even, an assassin is overpowered at the very door of the Queen's apartments. The feast of the Federation takes place, and the King again takes the National oath, but he gains nothing by it; and the Marseillais enter Paris. Poor King, so forlorn and helpless, so incompetent and yet so innocent, his is perhaps the most piteous figure in all the lurid drama, more so than those of the princesses, for their courage strikes one as of a less passive order.

Mirabeau, the one who might have guided the vessel of the Revolution into a safe port, died a year ago; and now, with the many struggling for the helm, it is drifting fast into a sea of blood.

Eulalie de St Hilaire comes across the courtyard at Cennes in the sunshine. A

cheerful clucking from cocks and hens greets her, and a girl's clear voice from within is singing some old Angevin song, which rings out into the cloudless July afternoon.

Mdlle. de St Hilaire is improved in appearance. She is positively grown; there is more colour in her face, and more decision in her step as she walks lightly forward on her high heels, clicking in measured time on the stone pavement. Her hands are full of flowers, for she is on her way to the church to make her accustomed offering. Roses, red, white, and pink, lay their fair heads on their dark green leaves, and marigolds lift their round faces with persistent effrontery, suggestive of nothing so little as "burden of sorrow," in spite of Clemence Isaure and her legendary nosegay. There, too, are the white lilies of Mary, and the iris, which may bear, did Eulalie but think of it, a sadder significance still, for is not this the mystical blos-

som chosen by Saint Louis in the ages of faith, when he placed his beloved France under the perpetual patronage of the Blessed Virgin? and is not the fleur-de-lis to be dyed in the royal blood which is to be poured out for the sins of the Saintly King's children? Eulalie adjusts her flowers tenderly, and shades them as much as possible from the sun, as she passes from under the shade of the gateway to the white dusty road outside. The lime trees, robed in their delicate pale green, are alive now with the drowsy bees that love them so well. Black Angers is sleeping on its twin hills in the mellow sunshine—Angers, where John of England "craves harbourage within your city walls," and where, refused it, he proposed to "lay this Angiers even with the ground, then, after, fight who shall be king of it;" where René, king and troubadour, first saw the light; and where his imperious daughter Margaret, her

mighty heart broken, rests in peace, far from the kingdom of her triumph and defeat. The golden summer light invests "the flinty ribs of this contemptuous city" with a tender mystical beauty. Through the valley gleams at intervals the river, and to the blue heavens the fields of flax smile back almost as divine an azure. The glory of the year has reached its height, and seems to pause and dream. The growth and awakening of nature is over, and the time of harvest and ingathering is yet to come.

It should be a day for happy thoughts, but Eulalie's quiet face is scarcely an index of hers. Perhaps she is thinking of a walk last autumn with M. de Limeuil, perhaps she is wondering when he will come again to Cennes; but whatever may be the burden of her meditations, they do not seem to affect her placidity. Victor writes now and then, under cover to Eugène, very formal, punctilious

epistles, and not many of them, for letter-writing is not a speciality of his by any means, and a rapid correspondence is as yet neither correct nor even possible; but, such as they are, these letters are abundantly satisfactory to Eulalie.

It grows very hot, it seems to her, hot and glaring, and the dust covers her feet with a fine powder as she plods on, getting a little out of humour now with her walk.

"I wish I had waited," she says. "My flowers will be dead before I get there. It is absolutely stifling; ah, here comes M. le Curé."

Père Florian it was, thinner, darker, more terribly in earnest than ever, toiling along the dusty road with the unflagging energy which neither heat nor cold, sunshine nor rain, ever seemed to affect.

"Will you tell M. your brother that I will visit him this evening? I have much

to say to him, for I am going away to-morrow."

He was almost out of sight before Eulalie had recovered her astonishment. Going away! Here was an extraordinary thing. Père Florian to go away, who had never been absent for more than a day since she could remember; who was, night and day, at the beck and call of every one of his flock. Where was he going? Who was to take his place? It was inconceivable.

Père Florian came up as he had promised that evening, and for a long time he and Eugène walked up and down their favourite path, while Eulalie sat at her work below. At last they came and sat down too, and she could ask the question she was burning to put.

"My father, why are you going to leave us? and is it for long?"

"I do not know, my daughter," he answered. "I go whither I am sent. A priest has no

will of his own; but I do not think that I shall come back."

"Not come back! Eugène, do you hear? Never come back to Cennes! Never see us again!" cried Eulalie, aghast, dropping her work, which slid to the ground and lay there unheeded, while she clasped her hands with an involuntary gesture of dismay.

"I wish for my part, that I did not think so," said the priest gently; "one can be sure of nothing in this sad world of ours."

"And where are you going?" she said breathlessly.

"To Paris. I have been sent for."

Eulalie turned pale as she glanced at her brother.

"Tell me," she asked falteringly, "is there fresh news? Anything terrible—"

"Nothing as yet," answered St Hilaire, "though much is possible. Do not fear, little one, I will tell you all I hear."

He looked straight into her face with the strong tender smile she had learnt to know by heart from her babyhood. She slid her hand into his.

"I am not afraid, Eugène."

Then she turned once more to Père Florian, who was regarding them both with an intent gaze, which had a strange admixture of compassion.

"My father, what shall we all do without you? Your poor and the Church—"

"M. Adhemar, from Angers, will serve the Church for the present; and for the poor, I leave them in your charge, my child—the only legacy I have to leave, but a very precious one," he said, with his old, kind smile.

Her eyes filled with tears.

"My father, I will do what I can, but—"

"Little one, all we can do is imperfect; let us be sure of that once for all. Ages of

wrong and oppression have sown a seed in this France of ours, of which we are about to reap the bitter harvest. Our weak hands, yours and mine, can do nothing to stay that hour. Therefore let us do what we can, and leave the rest to the good God. We shall all have to bear a heavy cross, and follow painfully along the Dolorous Way."

"You have told me always," she said gently, "that there is the cross to carry."

"Yes," he rejoined; "and the cross that this age has brought upon itself will be almost overpowering, for the tree has been growing for the last two hundred years. Ah, well, 'via crucis, via lucis.'"

She shrank a little closer to her brother, without moving her eyes from the priest's stern, sad face.

"My father," she said timidly, "is not that hard, to suffer for others' wrong-doing?"

"Not unjust—it can never be that. But

it may be sharp and severe," he answered slowly, as he looked up into the serene sky whence the sunset had passed away. Only a faint blush still lingered on the far horizon to tell of vanished splendour, and here and there a pale star sparkled into light.

Eulalie turned with a little sob and flung her arms round Eugène's neck.

" I can bear it ; I can bear whatever comes, with thee, Eugène ; but nothing shall part us, oh my brother ! "

CHAPTER VII.

PLOTS.

A daring pilot in extremity:
Pleased with the danger, when the waves went high
He sought the storms:—
So easy still it proves, in factious times,
With public zeal to cancel private crimes.

THERE is hardly any one, in these days, to come to Madame de Drou's reception. Almost all her friends and acquaintances have vanished out of sight, across the frontier into Germany, or over the Channel into England. A temporary evasion they call it; but a weary time is to elapse before an altered France will open her arms to them again. They will have to resort to many hard expedients to keep body and soul together in the lands of their exile. Scions

of the noblest houses, Vaudreuils, Montmorencis, Rohans, in spite of their patents of duke and marquis, of their crosses of St Louis, and orders of St Esprit, will teach the humanities, languages, music, very thankfully for a pittance, in many a sleepy old country town in England, where no one cares very much for this Revolution which has reversed everything in the France which is but a dim *terra incognita* to most of those inert provincial intellects. And when it is over, and a Bourbon comes back, or is brought back, to erect again the throne of Clovis on the ashes of the Empire, they too, these exiles, will return. Will that long martyrdom have taught them nothing?

Madame de Drou disapproves altogether of the wholesale departure of her friends.

"If their majesties had succeeded in reaching Metz last year," she says, "I should then have conceived it my duty also to leave

this besotted country, but as it is, I remain. What is the advantage of our order if we do not cleave to the crown? As to Gabrielle, she may go if she wishes. Our cousins near Angers, or Madame de Blamont, at Coblentz, would be charmed to receive her."

But Gabrielle always repudiates vigorously this view of the matter. She is not, whatever she may say of herself, as obstinate on some points as her aunt, who entirely declines to see any view of a question which does not please her; and, as yet, refuses to recognise the possibility of personal danger. Gabrielle can draw her own conclusions from events, but she is quite as stout-hearted as Madame de Drou, and her place is here, at her aunt's side. Neither of them goes out very often now. There is always the chance of some unpleasant encounter in the streets, especially if one's face is familiar to the populace, as having been much at Court. Nevertheless,

Gabrielle's spirits are not as yet much cowed. To some minds, the presence of danger, before it becomes imminent, is rather stimulating than otherwise, and besides, she has the indomitable hopefulness of youth, always ready to see a bright side of events and things, and trying, at any rate, to stifle the apprehensions that *will* rise up in spite of all her efforts.

"Mademoiselle resembles summer itself," remarks M. de Sabran, as he sits, coffee cup in hand, in Madame de Drou's apartment. He comes pretty often, and makes himself vastly agreeable, so Madame makes him welcome. This is strange, considering her views, but she knows, and chooses to know, very little about his proceedings; and considering how little she goes out, and how few there are now to bring her news, it is easy enough to maintain this amount of ignorance. Besides, Madame de Drou has her weak side; she made up her mind not to leave

Paris, but she has no objection to take other precautions; so when M. de Sabran hesitatingly advised her leaving the Hotel Drou as too conspicuous and well known a house, and reducing her establishment, she at once adopted the suggestion, with the saving clause that it was entirely her own original idea, and which she probably believed. But Gabrielle knew better, and it fretted her more than she chose to testify, to see the influence which De Sabran seemed to have established over her aunt. What could it possibly matter to him that they had gone into a small house, and had only Babette for personal attendance? Yet she can no more help laughing and talking to him in the old way than she can help looking up from under her long eyelashes, with the expression that he, and others, have found so irresistible. He is a deputy, and a Montagnard, and she accuses him audaciously of his Jacobinism,

an accusation which only seems to amuse him, for her life is so secluded that she really knows very little of all that the Mountain, and the Gironde too, are doing.

"Summer! a thousand thanks for the comparison, Monsieur, but I scarcely see its force myself," she retorts.

"Is not summer the most beautiful and joyous of the seasons?" he says, in his usual inflated style. "What further explanation would you have, Mademoiselle?"

"None, certainly, but let me see: beauty, well, let that pass, it is a matter of opinion; but joyous! How can I be joyous in a place so empty and dreary? I wish your friends, the bonnet-rouges, M. le Chevalier, had not driven away every one out of Paris, or that they would bring them back."

"I think," he remarks, looking at the ceiling, with a sinister smile which neither lady notices, "that my friends, as you are pleased

to call them, Mademoiselle, would be only too much delighted to see some of yours again."

"Gabrielle," says Madame de Drou, stiffly, "you should not call M. de Sabran a friend of such 'canaille.' It is a poor compliment. For it is part of Madame's system of successful self-deception to ignore De Sabran's position and opinions completely.

"Well, then, not a friend, but a patron," says Gabrielle, boldly; "do you like that distinction better, Monsieur? Was it not Du Guesclin who was a captain of Free Lances? And they called *him* the best knight in France—in those days."

She looks him straight in the face, with those fearless grey eyes of hers, as she speaks, her fingers busy over her embroidery at the same time. She can always hold her own in a war of words, and De Sabran admires her all the more for her daring tongue. It stings him so very slightly, and after all, she really

knows little about him or his doings as yet, he considers. Some day, no doubt, he will undeceive her, but it will be when he has the whip hand of her. That is an agreeable prospect to look forward to. To a mind like his, the process of taming such a spirit offers sufficient difficulties to be a highly interesting study. Meanwhile he enjoys her retorts and quips, and thinks how handsome she looks as she utters them. Such talents are really thrown away in her position. If she were only the least bit of a democrat, she might have a name, and a whole following of patriots. Madame Roland (whom he detests by the way) would be nowhere with her self-consciousness, and her dreary eloquence, and her want of humour. It is a pity, certainly, for he has an innate conviction that nothing will ever teach Mdlle. de Thouars the popular "*argot*" of the times, that nothing will bow that stubborn neck to the car of republican

excitement, whatever it may call itself for the moment. Those mirthful, mutinous eyes are teaching him, not for the first nor second time, the intoxicating lesson he is only too willing to learn, when his quick ear catches the sound of footsteps below.

"How can you complain of dulness, Mademoiselle," he remarks; "here are more visitors. One is, at any rate, coming up stairs," and as he speaks, the door is opened, and a new guest, in effect, is ushered in.

Gabrielle starts from her chair with a little cry of astonishment.

"M. le Curé—Père Florian; but what a surprise," she says, 'and when did you come? and why? and are they well at Cennes—that dear Cennes?"

"M. de St Hilaire and Mdlle. Eulalie are well," he says, in his usual grave tones, as soon as Gabrielle had recovered from her amazement so far as to present him to

Madame de Drou. "For me, I have not been long in Paris; and I promised our little Eulalie that, if possible, I would try to see you, Mademoiselle, and Madame your aunt."

"I am very glad," says Gabrielle, still perplexed, for the priest, never ready at ordinary conversation, relapses into silence, and, glancing round, she is relieved to light on a topic. "Ah, pardon, I should have presented you to M. the Chevalier de Sabran."

"I should have recalled myself to M. le Curé's recollection," says De Sabran, with his very best smile, "but that I perceived I was so unfortunate as to be forgotten."

"I remember you perfectly, Monsieur," says the priest quietly; "your visit to Cennes was not one to be forgotten;" to which remark, though apparently not made in the light of a compliment, De Sabran thinks it proper to respond with another smile and bow.

Gabrielle grows a little impatient of the by-play which she suspects, but does not understand. To be sure, Eulalie did mention some months ago that M. de Sabran had passed through Cennes, but that journey of his which seemed so mysterious at the time has been long forgotten; neither does it explain Père Florian's strange manner. Either he has some reason for disliking De Sabran, or his mode of expressing himself is unfortunately awkward; and as the latter conclusion is at present the most agreeable to her, she straightway makes up her mind to it. There is a pause. M. de Sabran drinks his coffee placidly and leisurely; the priest looks steadily before him, each is apparently resolved to outstay the other, and Gabrielle, who is not without a sense of humour, begins to feel a sensation of amusement at the situation. Père Florian sits there, long and black and resolute, without an idea of carrying off

things lightly, like nothing so little as the conventional butterfly abbé of the eighteenth century, of which type, indeed, Dorat-Cubières is a specimen, though he, it is true, has succeeded in forgetting that he ever assumed the tonsure. In this instance, it might be Bossuet come to life again, stern, fearless, and unsparing. And there is Léon de Sabran, the product emphatically of the age. Handsome, cynical, daring; careless of all the traditions of race, believing in nothing higher than himself; a representative of the genius of young France. Could there be two stronger antitypes? If Gabrielle de Thouars were a philosopher,—which she is not,— some such thoughts might present themselves to her mind; as it is, she only feels half inclined to laugh at the state of affairs, and to wish that one or the other would go. At last, M. de Sabran gives it up, and, with a slight smile, rises and takes

his departure, leaving Père Florian in possession of the field. "For the moment," he says to himself, as he walks leisurely downstairs; "however, I can have you by the heels very soon, M. le Curé."

"And now," says Gabrielle, "what brings you here, M. le Curé? and have you no more messages to me from Eulalie?"

"I have been sent for, and had no choice but to obey," he answers; "the little Eulalie sent no message but of her unfailing affection. Madame," he adds abruptly, "I have the honour to take my leave," and he rises and moves to the door.

"Stay," interrupts Gabrielle, for this is more than she can bear, "mon père, you know something of M. de Sabran—is it not so?"

He finds his tongue at once, and faces her without further hesitation.

"I know this—that he came as a fire brand

of evil and sedition among my people last year. If you were one of my flock, Mademoiselle, I would bid you beware."

Mademoiselle de Thouars throws up her handsome head disdainfully, while an angry flush mounts to the roots of her hair. She walks over to a window and stands looking out, without answering.

"Are you sure of this, M. le Curé?" asks Madame de Drou, who looks uncomfortably perplexed; "it is true that they say—that is, I have heard—that M. de Sabran's opinions are not all one would wish, in fact he is a deputy, but then so many of our noblesse have been tainted, more or less. However, if it is as you say, I must decline to receive him."

"But I do not believe it," says her niece, turning sharply round; "pardon, M. le Curé, but I think you have been deceived. M. de Sabran is a gentleman."

"Be it so," he answers; "believe it or not as you will; but it is true, and remember, Mademoiselle, I have warned you. Once more, adieu, and peace be with you," he ends solemnly as he goes.

"These priests from the provinces know nothing," remarks Gabrielle, pettishly; "one might as well be living in the middle ages. Is it not so, Madame my aunt?"

Madame looks up with a sigh, and something like tears in her eyes.

"I do not suppose the blessed saints knew much of the world either," she answers, slowly; "as for the middle ages, they were the ages of faith. If one had a director like that—"

Her niece stares at her in amazement.

"Consider, Madame, how fatiguing it would be. They are like that at Cennes; but it would not do here."

If Gabrielle is angry with Père Florian for putting into words her vague distrust of De

Sabran, she is still more angry with herself when he is gone. Every one knows that the ex-Chevalier is a Jacobin, and therefore it is quite possible that he might have stirred up the people at Cennes and elsewhere. But though she is ready to condone half his republicanism and ignore the rest, this strikes her as a depth of meanness positively revolting. Strange to say, she dislikes Père Florian for unveiling it to her eyes. But now that he is gone she can only remember the reverence in which Eulalie and her brother hold him, and wish that she could have held her tongue. A very contradictory character? Certainly, but that which is in truth her weakness, constitutes also one of her charms to some people, and is therefore all the more dangerous to herself, inasmuch as it fosters the caprice which is so strong an element.

Meanwhile, Père Florian is walking away swiftly to his temporary lodging; for he is

with an old friend and spiritual superior, in the parish of St Sulpice. His head bowed, his eyes fixed on the pavement, he is deep in thought, as he hurries on. Since the summons to repair to Paris reached him, he has been possessed by a strange presentiment. When the heavy country diligence bore him away from Cennes, where he had laboured for eighteen years, something told him that he would never again see those fragrant limes, the well, the peaceful church. As he went, he stretched out his arms and made the sign of the cross over the unconscious village; and then watched it with patient, yearning eyes, as long as it was visible. With all his rigour towards offenders, Père Florian's heart is very tender. How he has loved Cennes, no one knows now. How dear those people are to him, simple, ignorant as they are; even old Nanette, who has gone away to Angers, nay, even Gaston, that erring sheep. As he

walks now through the busy streets his thoughts are far away in Anjou. He will never go back there. A stranger will hear the confessions so long carried to him, other lips will minister at the altar, other hands will bear the chrism to the babe, the holy oil to the dying; ah, it is hard, hard. "Via Crucis, via lucis," he says again to himself, as he said to Eulalie de St Hilaire, the child he has taught and trained. He will have need to remember that before long.

A voice pronouncing his name makes him look up, and he once more encounters Léon de Sabran.

"Well met, M. le Curé," says the latter with well-feigned surprise in his tone, "permit me that I accompany you a little way."

Père Florian bows gravely, but does not affect the amount of pleasure testified by his companion.

"It gives me infinite satisfaction," begins

De Sabran as they walk on together, "to inquire for the amiable family of St Hilaire. I infer from your words in the apartment of Madame de Drou, that they are well?"

"Yes, M. le Chevalier, they are well," answers the priest concisely.

"That visit can never be forgotten," pursues the other, "so Arcadian, so refreshing—"

"Pardon me if I fail to understand you, Monsieur," says Père Florian, sternly.

"Delightful as that experience was," says De Sabran, airily, without paying the least attention to the interruption, "it could not but excite surprise that Mdlle. de Thouars should have remained so long in such sylvan retirement last year. It is one thing to be a shepherdess at Trianon, and another to be one in Anjou."

"Possibly Mademoiselle was happier even there than here," says Père Florian.

"I doubt it, M. le Curé, having the distinguished honour to know her well. But after all, what does it signify? She is not likely to bury herself in the provinces."

"M. le Marquis de Maurepas has lands in Auvergne," says the priest; "they may choose to live there."

De Sabran shrugs his shoulders contemptuously.

"M. de Maurepas has been absent from Paris for many months. Besides, M. le Curé, surely *that* contract will never be fulfilled."

"And why not, M. le Chevalier? As I think I told you once before, I know of no reason to the contrary. Indeed, from my knowledge of Mademoiselle de Thouars, I should say she was a demoiselle very unlikely to break any tie once recognised."

"Permit me to ask, M. le Curé, if you have any influence with Mademoiselle?"

"Why, Monsieur?" says the priest, stopping short, and looking fixedly at his interlocutor. De Sabran returns his gaze with unruffled composure.

"Because I would ask you to employ it on my behalf. Wait," he goes on, for he sees the other about to answer, "you may not be aware, probably, that it is possible that you may soon find yourself in a position of danger. From this I can save you, and will, on this condition."

"I thought so, M. le Chevalier. I do not know that I have any influence with Mademoiselle de Thouars, but this I do know, that from my recollection of your visit to Cennes last year, and what followed, I have thought it right to warn her against you."

It is a rash speech, and Lèon de Sabran's face grows very white and hard, but he bows profoundly.

"I am infinitely obliged that you should

think me of so great consequence, Monsieur le Curé," he says, with a sneer. "I shall not forget, believe me."

So they part. Père Florian goes on his way, saddened, but not alarmed in any way at this encounter, and its conclusion. Late at night a very grimy patriot presents himself at the lodging of the deputy Sabran, not far from that of Robespièrre and the Church of the Assumption in the Rue St Honoré. That personage, a very different being from the dilettante chevalier who was loitering a few hours ago at Madame de Drou's, is writing busily, but this sort of messenger can always gain admittance to him. The present visitor, who, if his patriotism is to be measured by his dishevelled appearance, should be an invaluable auxiliary, despatches his errand in a few words. He merely communicates a certain address, which the other carefully notes down. The latter reads it

over musingly, as his delegate stumbles down the stairs. "Near St Sulpice, with the Bishop of Beauvais. Good. Yes, Père Florian, I have an excellent memory—especially for injuries."

CHAPTER VIII.

BACK AGAIN.

My mild entreaty shall not make you guilty.
Go where you will, the king shall be commanded;
And be you kings; command and I'll obey.

ANOTHER surprise is in store for Mademoiselle de Thouars this same evening. A full hour after Père Florian's departure, a third visitor presents himself, none other than the Marquis de Maurepas. Let us see what brings him back, now, of all times, when so many of his order have put as many leagues as convenient between themselves and Paris. Long ago he fulfilled that mysterious mission confided to him in the Queen's apartments at the Tuileries, but he has delayed his return because he believed the cause to which he has vowed himself to be best served thus. During

this summer, forebodings of evil, amply justified by the result, have pressed themselves upon the Court, and on those in any degree attached to it. Constant fears of assassination possess the minds of the royal family, and so they, in concert with those who still remain to them, devise, in their forlorn state, secret means of defence. At this time five or six hundred nobles of higher or less degree, are living in different hôtels near the Tuileries, bearing concealed weapons, and having passwords and cards of admission to the palace; a self-constituted guard having but one fixed intention, the protection of the royal person. And of this band is Raoul de Maurepas. He can no longer wear his old uniform of the disbanded body-guard, but he is as ready, as in the merry days that are gone, to do all that it imposed on him, ready, with his life in his hand.

He has only just arrived, just discovered

Madame de Drou's present residence; he can stay but for a very few minutes; yet he might, to judge by his manner, have just arrived from a banquet with the Count d'Artois, or from her Majesty's faro-table. His dress is studiously plain, and to a close observer, there are visible lines of care and harass on his face. Madame receives him with marked cordiality; Mademoiselle with a magnificent curtsy.

"Ah, M. le Marquis," says the former, "what happiness to see you again. We have been regretting the loss of all our friends, and now you drop on us from the clouds."

"Madame does me too much honour by the comparison," he says, as he drops into a chair. "Will Madame pardon the late hour of this visit? I only arrived to-day, and must remain but a short time."

"I will pardon anything and everything if

you will give us an account of your doings. We are devoured by dulness here."

"Then what I could relate would by no possibility relieve you, Madame. It is fatiguing to the last extremity."

"You forget, Madame," says Gabrielle, speaking for the first time, "that M. le Marquis may not choose to tell us very much of his late absence, in which case it would be the worst taste on our part to press for particulars."

She speaks in a full measured tone, that, she flatters herself, amply conceals the feeling of pique that prompts her, but never once raises her eyes, though M. de Maurepas regards her intently. Madame de Drou draws herself up stiffly.

"I am not accustomed to be schooled by my niece," she remarks; "but if I were inclined to quarrel with you, Monsieur, it might be for your long absence,

and the silence observed towards us. As it is—"

"As it is, Madame must accord me her forgiveness, and that of Mademoiselle, as I am once more at their feet."

"And to remain in Paris?"

"That is as may be," he answers, a strange expression crossing his face for an instant. There is a pause, and then, to Madame's amazement, her guest, looking at his watch, rises and takes his leave.

"Already!" she ejaculates, in great consternation. "You have but just arrived, and we expire for news."

Since her last pettish little speech, Gabrielle has sat silent, with her eyes fixed on the floor. Now she rises, as if moved by an uncontrollable impulse, and hurries after him. She lays her hand lightly on his arm.

"Monsieur," she says, in a low voice, "I

know there is something beneath all this. Will you not tell me?"

She does not notice, in her eagerness, that an expression of hesitation, almost of perplexity, very unusual to it, comes into his face. It is gone before he speaks.

"Mademoiselle," he answers, in the same low tone, "when I went away some months ago, I said that I trusted you. May I ask you to return that confidence now for a little while?"

He lays his own hand on the white fingers resting on his sleeve, but Gabrielle snatches them away.

"Enough, Monsieur," she says; "I have asked too much it seems," and she turns back into the room within.

"M. de Maurepas had apparently little to say," says her aunt, with a puzzled and somewhat offended expression.

"So little that he might have spared

himself the trouble of his visit," rejoins Gabrielle.

"He has been absent several months," pursues Madame de Drou, still pondering. "Strange that he does not tell us where—"

"Then, for Heaven's sake, Madame, do not let us ask him. It is of very little importance."

"Pardon," says Madame, weightily, "it is of great importance, considering the relation in which he stands to you—" But her niece cuts the matter short, and declines to discuss it any further.

And yet, when she has time to think, her heart smites her, not for the first time that evening. It is she who has chosen wilfully to ignore the tie between them; if he now fails to recognise it, who is the most to blame? She knows well enough, when she chooses to consider, that De Maurepas has had no choice in the matter; that he is bound in honour to say as little as possible

of such a mission as he has had to discharge. She has not really forgotten those few words of his, of which he has reminded her to-night. "Mademoiselle will remember that I trust her." But she cannot quite trust him. Is she of so poor a nature that perfect trust is impossible to her? Or, is it that the love of power is so strong within her that she cannot bear that any influence, be it what it may, should be stronger than hers? "He should have told me all," she says, working round again to her indignant impulses, "and then I should have known how to put confidence in him." Ah, my poor Gabrielle, do you know so little what trustfulness is that you must needs sap its very foundations? Where would be the need of it if you were told all? How are you to meet the tempest that is coming? Verily, with all your fancied strength, Eulalie de St Hilaire is happier, yes, and wiser than you.

It is the 10th of August, one of those dates which stand out with startling distinctness against the mist of revolving events, a milestone on a sinister road, for at its close, France has no longer a King, even in name, and he who once bore that name, and wore that heavy crown, has taken another long step on the fatal journey which is bearing him with such frightful velocity to the scaffold.

All night long the Queen and Madame Elisabeth have been listening from the balconies of the palace to the sinister noises in the city, and the terrible notes of the tocsin; the King has confessed and been absolved. Raoul de Maurepas and others have been taking measures to resist the expected assault. Mandat, the commandant of the Tuileries, sent for by the municipality, has been slaughtered on the steps of the Hôtel de Ville; and so the night of suspense

wears on; and day breaks with a lurid splendour that seems a prophecy, for the sky is red as if from the reflection of some great fire.

And now the King comes forth, to encourage, by his presence and his speech, the troops placed for his defence, the Swiss guard, faithful to death, the National guard, a very broken reed, and a force of artillery. Is it the King of France and Navarre? If it had been the first Bourbon sovereign, he would have presented himself in a different way. The "Bon Béarnais" would assuredly have faced his rebellious subjects with helm on head and spur on heel; he would have known when and where to strike. But this poor descendant has not even the bodily presence which can impress in any degree, and he only utters a few indistinct words as he passes from post to post. She should have been the King, that stately woman,

who follows him, with head erect and tearless eyes, proud and unshrinking. Whatever may have been her follies and vanities and heedlessnesses (and surely the crucible of sorrow has burnt them all away now), the hour of danger arouses a sublimity of heroism in Marie Antoinette. Ah, she is still a queen. The Swiss guard, the grenadiers, the citizens, all who look at her now, acknowledge that. There are cries of loyalty, passionate vows of fidelity; they pray to be allowed to kiss her hand, they beseech her only to touch their arms, they fling their cloaks under her feet . . . Never again.

Two or three who stand by lift the Dauphin in their arms, and swear to die for him, and the Queen steps forward. Snatching his pistols from the Swiss Commandant d'Affry, she gives them to the King.

"Now is the moment, Sire," she says,

eagerly, "save yourself or die with glory, among these your friends."

Perhaps she is wrong, perhaps the time has past for such enthusiasm. At any rate, the King's irresolute hands return the weapons to their owner; and he passes on to the Cour Royale. The Queen draws a long breath and clenches her hands tightly, but she controls herself, as the slender cortège comes in sight of the battalions under arms there. De Maurepas and the others who surround the King gather at the windows and balconies, and raise the cry of "vive le roi." It is echoed back at first, but two fresh battalions enter the courtyard and utter no sound. In all haste they are removed, and posted further away from the palace; but as they defile before the King they shout "vive la nation."

Yes, it is no use. The people are arrayed to-day against the King, and they have the

right of the strongest. His life is absolutely in danger before he comes back from this futile inspection; insults, threats have accompanied him to the very doors.

All night long the Cordeliers have been sitting in the Quartier St Marceau, and there Danton, the Titan of the Revolution, has raised the "ça ira." There is no more hesitation. The Marseillais are ready; Santerre, hereafter infamous for cruelty, leads one column of attack, and Westermann the other. As soon as the latter reaches the Carrousel he disposes his troops with perfect address, and then rides slowly forward, with some of the Marseillais and the fédérés of Brest, to the door of the Cour Royale. He knocks with the pommel of his sword, demanding entrance in the name of the people; but the Swiss and the National Grenadiers refuse, and he orders five guns to advance and shatter the doors . . . Within, in his study,

sits the King. Round him are gathered his own family and immediate attendants. The Queen is sitting near him, her head resting upon her hand, and by the window is Raoul de Maurepas, motionless, but with a heedful alacrity in his attitude as he stands, which shows that no sound from without is lost on him. All are indeed listening, with strained attention. Louis is leaning forward, his hands resting on his knees, and the look of pitiable perplexity deepened on his broad, honest face . . .

Suspense cannot last for ever; Roederer, one of the departmental members, penetrates to the royal presence, and demands to speak to the King alone, except for the princesses.

"Sire," he exclaims, as soon as he and the other delegates are left with the King and his family, "there are not five minutes to lose. Your troops have withdrawn their

allegiance, the Marseillais occupy the Carrousel. You can be safe only under the protection of the Assembly."

The king looks up slowly; neither fear nor anger in look or voice.

"I have not seen any great numbers on the Carrousel," he says, vaguely.

"Sire," says Roederer, "there are twelve pieces of cannon, and all the populace are following the Marseillais."

The Queen makes a step forward. Is it too late, she thinks; must all be abandoned, honour and fame at one blow?

"We have still some troops, Monsieur," she says, haughtily; "we have still some troops left, I trust." Roederer looks fixedly at her.

"Yes, Madame," he answers, "but this time it is all Paris that is advancing against you." And he turns again to the King.

"It is no longer a question of entreaty,

Sire; there is nothing left, but we must take you by force, if necessary, to the Assembly."

Louis raises his head, and looks the delegate in the face, as if to assure himself of the truth; then he turns his eyes on the Queen, instinctively; the weaker nature appealing to the stronger. Who shall say what a struggle rends that proud heart of hers, what bitter humiliation and shame she chokes back, before she says, quietly, "Let us go."

Meanwhile, those waiting in the ante-room almost hold their breath in suspense. It is certain that the appearance of Roederer and his colleagues augurs something of grave moment, but, nevertheless, every one here present has his life in his hand, ready to lay it down, before a hair of the King's head shall fall.

Suddenly the door opens, and Roederer appears on the threshold. He raises his hand to command attention, but it is need-

less, for all press forward with breathless anxiety as he speaks.

"The King and his family go to the Assembly *alone*, except for the department and ministers. Clear the way."

Ah, it is all over. What is the use of courage or loyalty, when they are rejected? What is there to die for, even? Raoul de Maurepas turns white as death, and tears his cross of St Louis from his breast. With the same fierce impulse he snaps his sword across his knee, and throwing the pieces from him, stands with folded arms to see the next act of the drama. Some others follow his example; a few even weep tears of shame, but the municipal guard has come, and the hapless cortège is coming forth.

The King comes first and then the rest. No one looks up except the Queen, and her eyes travel round with the desperate, hunted look of some tortured creature. As those

woeful eyes meet his, a great sorrow and compunction rise in De Maurepas' heart. He was wrong, hasty—never mind, it was the impulse of a moment, and he can undo it yet. . . . The royal fugitives have gone on. As they cross the threshold, the King asks for the safety of those remaining in the Palace, and is told that all who go out unarmed and without uniform will be unmolested; an assertion, the terrible falsehood of which will be only too soon tested.

Some hesitation, some lingering unwillingness comes into the King's mind, as he reaches the vestibule leading to the garden. He turns, looking over the heads of his followers, and stops, but it is only to make his old remark.

"I see no great crowd in the Carrousel."

As Roederer repeats his former assertions, the King listens apathetically, and a driven, hopeless expression settles down over his

face. He makes no further expostulation. Wearily he passes over the door sill, wearily he goes forth from the Palace of his fathers —for ever.

The decree of the ministers is so far softened, that some officers of the Royal household are permitted to accompany their master, and among those the Marquis de Maurepas is enabled to find himself. Thus he escapes the frightful slaughter which rages in the Tuileries after the King's departure, when cruelty runs riot, when the eighty men of the Swiss Guard fall to a man on the steps of the grand staircase, and the household are massacred in one vast hecatomb. Verily, the age of Reason is inaugurated in blood, and even so will it find its expiation.

And meanwhile, in the hall of the National Assembly, Louis is looking on at the spectacle of his own degradation. Every one knows the story of that day of horrors.

How the King and those who are with him sit for sixteen hours in the tribune of the *Logographe;* how they hear even there the shrieks and blows in the courtyard of the Manège, and how at midnight a hasty and squalid lodging is provided for the discrowned sovereign. The same unshaken composure sustains him throughout, and yet —is it courage, or the apathy of despair? When food is brought, he can eat and drink with placid satisfaction, and the unfailing appetite of a Bourbon. Somehow one turns, instinctively, to the two princesses. They make no pretence even at indifference, and yet one is struck by the higher quality of their heroism. Louis the Sixteenth sees his crown pass away from him like a heavy burden which has long oppressed him. Marie Antoinette beholds that downfall as an intolerable shame. So the long hours pass away, and finally, on the 13th, the

prison of the Temple receives them till death brings utter freedom.

Let us come back to Gabrielle de Thouars.

All day long has the roar of the people surged through the streets of the city so soon to be dishonoured, and though their present house is, in some degree, removed from any great thoroughfare, Madame de Drou and her niece have at last realised, if they never did before, what this Revolution may mean for them. From time to time rumours have come to them, distorted no doubt, yet bearing a colouring of truth, and in no way tending to allay their anxiety. They are, neither of them, prostrated by terror, for they have the courage of their race, but each feels as if she had lived years instead of hours, when the summer twilight descends. Gabrielle, besides, has her own reasons for fear and anguish. Wherever the King may

be, there, she feels, must be Raoul de Maurepas, and what more likely than that he is lying dead, on some staircase slippery with blood, like the guard at Versailles only three years ago?

Who can tell? How shall she know? She wrings her hands in that intolerable suspense. She has forgotten all her fancied anger; that has passed away. She can only remember that he is most likely, if alive, in sore peril, and that she treated him ill the last time she ever saw him. Perhaps she will never see him again. Oh, not that—not that! If she could only see Père Florian; she feels that his uncompromising sternness would act like a moral tonic; but she does not know, and will not for some days, what has befallen *him*.

CHAPTER IX.

THE ARRESTS OF THE NONJURORS.

They muster in the court below,
Their face is dark with hate ;
They don their arms, they grasp their swords,
They thunder at the gate.

THAT same 10th of August, at night, lists of the proscribed priests were sent to the different sections of Paris, with orders for their arrest. Père Florian was sojourning in the parish of St Sulpice, in the same house as De la Rochefoucauld, Bishop of Beauvais, when, late in the evening of that terrible day, an armed band thundered at the door.

They burst tumultuously in on its being opened in all haste, and confronted the two priests, who faced them composedly.

"You are the Bishop of Beauvais?" said

one of the intruders, roughly, to the elder of the two.

"I am," said the Bishop, quietly. "I conclude you intend to arrest me."

"Just so," said the new comer; "but who is this?"

"My name is Célestin Florian, curé of the parish of Cennes near Angers."

"Oh, then, we have nothing to do with you. I am sorry to deprive you of your companion, but Monseigneur must accompany us."

"Stay," said another man, who had not yet spoken, "he may not be on your list, but this is the very priest I have my own instructions about. Don't be cast down, mon père, you shall go with Monseigneur after all."

Without further loss of time the two were led off and placed in the convent of the Carmes, in the Rue Vaugirard, a place

sacred now by the memory of those faithful captives.

All that night the arrests were going on. Neither charity nor devotion were any safeguard. The Abbé Sicard, who had given himself up to the help of the deaf and dumb for many years, was one object of the search, and the Archbishop of Arles was another. Some were placed in the seminary of St Firmin, but a hundred and twenty were imprisoned in the Carmes. The proceedings were so sudden, that none of the prisoners were provided with any necessaries of life, nor was any preparation made for them in their place of captivity. Forlorn as they were, one of the sectionaries, touched with compassion, even went himself to houses near by to ask for charity, and on this their friends gladly sent in food and beds. For a short time the incarcerated priests were allowed to receive the visits of their friends,

and to walk in the convent garden; but this could not last.

The first symptom of the rapidly approaching end was the arrival, to share their captivity, of the aged and infirm priests from the house of S. François de Sales, driven through the streets with blows and menaces; the professors and pupils of S. Sulpice, and the Eudistes, with their superior, Hébert, the King's confessor. On the 2nd September the morning walk of the prisoners was put off, and the guard was changed unusually early. . . .

"Do not fear, Messieurs," said one of them even then; "if they come to attack you, we can defend you."

But the decree had gone forth, and the time was very short now. Rumours of the coming slaughter were whispered in different directions, and the friends of the captives implored the authorities for mercy, not without

effect in some cases. Even Robespierre, Marat, and Danton saved certain priests in whom they were interested.

Gabrielle de Thouars, horror-stricken at the vague possibilities she heard suggested, flung her pride to the winds with characteristic impetuosity, and sent an urgent message to the citoyen Sabran, demanding an interview. He came at once, and she began without delay.

"Do not let us fence with each other any longer, Monsieur," she said hurriedly; "there is some horrible plot against the imprisoned priests. You can, I know, do what I ask of you. Save Père Florian, I beseech you."

"You over-rate my influence, Mademoiselle," he answered ; " besides, I know of no such plot as you apprehend—"

He stopped, for a look of contempt, such as she could not control, passed over Gabrielle's face.

"You appear incredulous, Mademoiselle," he said, with rising anger.

"Pardon," she replied; "but you were present at the Hôtel de Ville during the infamous proceedings of the 10th of last month —and *not* with the King."

"It is scarcely prudent, in that case, to stigmatize them as infamous," he said, quietly.

"That is true," she rejoined, impetuously, as she recollected herself; "Forget what I said, M. le Chevalier, only — save Père Florian."

"And why, Mademoiselle?" he asked, coldly.

"Because he is the dear friend of M. de St Hilaire and of his sister—the friend of years. They showed you hospitality last year."

"Why not say for your own sake?" he said, unmoved. "Mademoiselle must know that there is little my devotion would not attempt for her sake."

"Well then, Monsieur, for my sake," she said hastily, with the old smile just a little forced.

"Be it so," he answered slowly; "that shall nerve my best endeavours."

But as he turned to go the door opened, and Madame de Drou walked in slowly and feebly, yet with unabated dignity. Obstinate as she had long been with regard to M. de Sabran, and steadily as she had persisted in ignoring his public proceedings, the 10th August had been too much for her. She greeted him now with a freezing curtsy, and proceeded, in a few ponderous sentences, to discuss the present deplorable state of affairs.

"For my part, all ideas are centred in the intolerable fact of their majesties' imprisonment," she said, as soon as she was established in her arm-chair. "Of course such a state of things cannot continue; but while they do, all other considerations must bow.—Thy

marriage must be put off, my child," she added, turning to her niece, and tapping her snuff-box with a pretty hand, still white and soft.

Now this remark she made of set purpose. She had not the remotest idea where the Marquis de Maurepas might be, but the Chevalier de Sabran, or the citoyen Sabran, if he preferred that appellation, was no doubt an admirer of Gabrielle's; and since it appeared only too clear that he was the reddest of republicans, he must be made to understand that to address a De Thouars was too preposterous to be tolerated. Gabrielle's quick wit saw that this was, at that moment, an unlucky remark, and she would have spoken, but before she could open her lips De Sabran interposed.

"Have I then, Madame, the happiness to offer my felicitations?" he said, in a very gentle voice. "Is the marriage of Mademoiselle an affair arranged?"

"Undoubtedly, Monsieur," answered Madame promptly. "It has long been settled, and I trust will very soon be concluded. For me, I shall have lived long enough then, and M. the Marquis de Maurepas is in every way admirable."

"Madame is right in all respects," he answered. "I again ask leave to felicitate Mademoiselle, and to say adieu."

As he went away his eyes met Gabrielle's for a moment, and she turned pale, for that glance communicated to her an indefinable pang of apprehension, though not for herself. She had, it is true, one talisman of hope in the shape of a few words on a scrap of paper brought to her on the 14th of the month before, for they told her that Raoul de Maurepas was safe, though they gave no clue as to his whereabouts. We shall hereafter see how he fared.

CHAPTER X.

THE MARTYRS OF THE CARMES.

By good S. Denys' Altar, straight
The Bishop takes his place ;
A gleam of twilight softly falls
Upon his reverend face.
He standeth there with clasped hands,
Each chapel groweth dim,
Night cometh fast o'er all the earth,
But never more on him.

It was the afternoon of the 2d of September, still soft and clear, a very day of God. On peaceful uplands and wide fields far and near the reapers were gathering in the harvest. All the hope was come to fulfilment, all the glory of the year had reached its culminating point. Fruit hung ripe and thick and ruddy. . . . And here in Paris, under the same glad

sunlight, the same pure sky, men were making ready for a carnival of unspeakable horror.

Some of the friends of the imprisoned priests came to visit them that morning, and went away in tears. Among these visitors was De Sabran, who, for his part, testified no tendency to such lachrymose exhibition. He sought out Père Florian without loss of time, and addressed him without any circumlocution, for he knew the man he had to deal with.

"Monsieur," he said, "I am come to save you—no matter from what—but there is no time to lose."

"And your condition, Monsieur?" asked the priest.

De Sabran smiled approvingly.

"You are quite right," he said. "It is needless to say I have a condition to propound, but it is a very simple one. Write me here a letter addressed to Mdlle. de Thouars, assuring her, on your faith, or how

you please to put it, that the Marquis de Maurepas is dead. It is but stretching a point. If he is not, he soon will be. Sign your own name, you understand. Say then, my father, it is quite simple, is it not?"

"Quite simple," answered Père Florian. "I reject it."

"One moment. Have you considered the alternative? It is between life—and death. It cannot signify to you. Why should you care if this emigré live or die?"

"I do not know him at all; but I know what truth is, and I will not lend a finger to bring you any closer to that lady."

"Consider," reiterated De Sabran.

"I have considered. Leave me, Monsieur, I entreat you, and I pray God to bring you to a better mind."

He did not know, he never was to know, that it was to this man he in especial owed his imprisonment. It would have been just

the same, except that there might have risen up in his mind a greater fervour of personal forgiveness and of pity. Yes, pity, though he, the priest, was a helpless captive in deadly peril, and his tempter was the successful republican, the idol for the present, at least of some of his party, holding the reins of an utterly irresponsible power. Something like compunction came for an instant into De Sabran's cold, cynical heart, as he met Père Florian's steadfast eyes, but he banished it at once. It was weak to regret it. The priest was but an obstacle in his way; he might have been useful, perhaps, if he had chosen, but as it was, he was better disposed of. He would very soon be able to solve the mystery of his coming fate.

At two o'clock a commissary arrived, who called over the names of the captives, and they were sent into the convent garden. At its further end was an alley, between a hedge

and the wall dividing the garden from the Benedictines of the Blessed Sacrament, and here some took refuge. The rest gathered in and near a little oratory, and there said vespers solemnly, for they knew the end was near.

They were still kneeling when a frightful noise arose at the garden gate, which was suddenly burst open, and seven or eight men rushed in. They were all young, all wore the bonnet-rouge, red sash and cravat—the terrible "Red Brothers of Danton."

"Monseigneur," said Père Florian to the Archbishop of Arles, who was near the oratory, "this time they are really come."

"Ah, well, dear friend," said the Archbishop, "let us thank God that we have to offer our lives to Him in such a cause."

The first to fall was the Abbé Girault, director of the Ladies of St Elizabeth, who was struck down while reciting his breviary, and then the carnage went on.

Those of the assailants who advanced to the oratory asked threateningly for the Archbishop, and reaching the group of priests, first addressed the Abbé Pannonie, who made no answer, hoping to save the Archbishop, but, putting the others aside, the latter stepped calmly forward in answer to the shouts of his name, his hands crossed on his breast. With one more effort to save him, Père Florian threw himself before him and held him back.

"Let me pass," said the Archbishop; "if my blood will satisfy them, what does it signify if I die?—I am he whom you seek," he added.

There arose a wild outcry.

"Ah, wretch, thou art then the Archbishop of Arles?" they cried.

"I am he," he repeated, steadily.

"Thou art he who shed the blood of so many patriots at Arles?"

"Never," he said indignantly. "I have never injured any one," but a blow with a sword silenced him, and six wounds laid him dead on the ground.

Some of the priests who stood near were slain at once, others dispersed for the moment over the garden. Père Florian was drawn back by some of his brethren into the oratory, where the assassins fired on them through the railings which surrounded it. At this juncture a commissary and a fresh band arrived, and changed the order of proceedings.

"Stay," he cried, "it is not thus that you must work. The vengeance of the People is just; but the innocent must be spared."

On this, the commandant of the porte at the end of the garden, ordered the priests back to the church. There, in the sanctuary and before the high altar, they confessed each other, and recited the office for the dying.

Into the church poured the Red Brothers of Danton, impatient to complete their work; but the commandant again interposed, saying that the priests had not yet been judged. His unruly followers interrupted him.

"No matter," said they; "they are all guilty and must die."

However, some sort of hasty tribunal was improvised by means of a table which the commissary placed near the corridor leading from the left of the altar to a double staircase; and at the top of a flight of steps were posted two of the assailants.

In the midst of the wild uproar, before these arrangements were completed, the Bishop of Beauvais, who had been wounded in the oratory, was carried in, and laid down. His brother, the Bishop of Saintes, hurried to embrace him, but was not permitted to remain with him. The assassins by this time were gathered in the nave of the church,

which was divided from the sanctuary by the grille, which they were unable to force, but matters were speedily arranged to their satisfaction.

The proceedings were very simple, for it was needful to appease these last as far and as soon as possible. The priests kneeling before the High Altar were called down, two by two, and merely asked if they still refused to take the constitutional oath. At each answer they were led through the door-way at the top of the steps, where the two assassins posted there struck them first, and they were passed to others below, who finished the work to the glory of the nation.

The Bishop of Saintes, when his name was called, lingered for one moment to kiss the altar, and then passed forth with the lofty serenity with which he had led many a procession in his own cathedral, and after him came the general of the Eudistes, already

wounded by the side of the Archbishop of Arles.

In a side chapel of the nave, lay the Bishop of Beauvais, and by him knelt Père Florian. They had already confessed, and now spoke from time to time, in spite of the pain which one was suffering, with the serene composure of those who have already passed through the bitterness of death. As each succeeding victim met his death, the cry of "Vive la Nation" came pealing down the arches of the church, and the steady call of that sinister muster-roll told how short the time was growing.

Did recollections of peaceful days down in Anjou, of the daily round from prime to compline, fulfilled for so many years at Cennes, come to trouble Père Florian at this supreme hour? Perhaps it all seemed to him as a dream, as if that past was only a realm of shadows; and this, the dishonoured church,

the cries, the blows, the work of death, the only reality after all.

"It must be coming near, my brother," said the Bishop, his voice faint, his face wrung with pain; "and it is welcome, if it be to glorify the good God."

"Monseigneur," said Père Florian, "we are honoured in that He accepts our blood at this hour, for the sake of France."

So amid terror and pain these two Confessors of the Faith awaited their doom.

"The Bishop of Beauvais! Where is the Bishop of Beauvais?" came the cry, and two of the Red Brothers dashed into the chapel.

"I am willing to die with my brethren," said the Bishop, meekly; "but my thigh is broken, and I cannot stand. Help me to walk."

"That is easily arranged, Monseigneur," said one of his executioners; "we will lead you."

"I will go with you, and help to support you," said Père Florian, rising to his feet; but he was repulsed.

"Not so fast, good father," said the last speaker; "your turn will come soon enough. At present we will act as the sub-deacons of Monseigneur."

As the Bishop was lifted up by his rough supporters, he turned and crossed his companion.

"A sharp road, my brother, but a short one," he gasped, as Père Florian fell once more on his knees to receive that last episcopal blessing.

Then the Bishop was dragged away by the arms, and the priest was left for the few short minutes that remained to him.

Alone—friendless. Would they ever know his fate at home? or would his end be swallowed up in the mystery which must attend such wholesale slaughter? Only one of

many ; who would know or care ? Ah, well, there had at least been no self-seeking in this doom that had come upon him. He had striven after duty ; he had foreseen, with an aching heart, the vengeance that would come on the wrongs of centuries; and if his frail life was to go down in the vortex it did not much matter after all. If France was to rise again, purified after this terrible cleansing, he was ready that his blood should help. It came in the road of simple obedience ; that was enough.

"Célestin Florian."

He passed silently into the nave, his eyes fixed on his breviary, reciting the office of compline, for four hours had passed since the slaughter had begun. The sanctuary was empty and deserted now. The High Altar from which so many martyrs had passed to their passion, wrapped in gloom, rose above its flight of steps. The shadows of the Sep-

tember night were falling, dim and solemn, as Père Florian came forth.

By the table, placed to the left near the corridor, stood the commissary; and in the nave and at the doorway were gathered the Red Brothers, who had, by this time, established an irrefragable right to their sinister name.

"Célestin Florian, do you still refuse the oath of the Civil Constitution?"

He did not lift his eyes, but he said, quite firmly and distinctly,

"I do refuse."

Then he passed on through the doorway, to be received, beyond it, with pike and sword. Before him lay, as they fell, the bodies of the many slain on the blood-stained floor of the church. . . .

He looked steadily at them before his breviary dropped from his failing hands; and he uttered the last words of Francis Xavier, the saint and martyr.

"In Te, Domine, speravi, non confundar in œternum," he said, in a clear loud voice, as he went down under the pikes of the Red Brothers of Danton.

Was it all in vain—is it still in vain, that those two hundred died in the Convent of the Carmes, besides the many who were falling elsewhere in Paris, in one vast hecatomb of victims? Who shall say? To some, as to Père Florian, it may have appeared as a solemn expiatory sacrifice. This we know, at least, that faithful endurance and great patience cannot be wasted, even though their results be never seen on this side the grave.

CHAPTER XI.

THE SECOND OF SEPTEMBER.

They made themselves a fearful monument,
The wreck of old opinions.

All through that terrible day Madame de Drou and her niece watched and waited; listening to the ghastly rumours which came at intervals, hearing sometimes the clamour of the frantic populace, which recalled the doings of the 10th of August. But not until the next morning did they know with any certainty of the unutterable horrors of that day and night. It was on that night that Bilhaud de Varennes arrived at the prison of the Abbaye to give each of the self-constituted executioners their wages of twenty-four livres. "Think you," said one, "that I have only earned twenty-four livres?

I have killed more than forty with my own hand." It was on that night that the prisoners of La Force, including those attached to the Court whose lives were spared on the 10th of August, were brought before the tribunal, and among them, Marie Josephe, Princesse de Lamballe, the Queen's dearest friend, who had even followed her to the Temple. She, too, fell on a pile of dead, and her head, the long hair dressed and powdered as of old, was borne off on a pike, to be displayed before the windows of the Royal prisoners, in order that "the Austrian" might look her last on it. She was spared that sight of anguish, however, by the King's interposition. And at S. Germains, the Bernardines, Salpêtrière, Conciergerie, and Châtelet, the work of death went on. At intervals the executioners, weary of slaughter, hungry and thirsty, would rest, sitting on the heaps of slain, while food was brought to

them, and then refreshed, they would fall to work again.

Something of the truth, though, it is true, but a little of it, came occasionally to the obscure and humble house where the aunt and niece were sojourning. Little though they really knew, that little was sufficiently appalling to the three helpless women who were the sole inhabitants of the house. But whatever their personal fears might be, some powerful influence protected them. Early that afternoon a letter was brought to Mdlle. de Thouars, left, said Babette, by a lad, who ran away as soon as he had delivered it. It contained only a few words.

"Fear nothing, whatever happens; but, I implore you, remain at home. Let nothing tempt you to leave the house."

There was neither date nor signature, but it was easy to conjecture that it came from De Sabran. Nevertheless, neither she nor her

aunt felt as yet sufficient confidence in his powers of protection, to acknowledge their fears fully allayed. At such a time of wild anarchy and ungoverned fury, what could he do had he ten times the power he assumed to have?

Hourly they expected to be arrested, or slaughtered in their own home, and the long watches of that night Madame de Drou spent on her knees at the end of her room, which she had hastily fitted as an oratory on coming into the house. Sometimes Gabrielle would join her for a little while, but suspense made her too restless to remain long anywhere. She wandered from room to room, sometimes standing for a few minutes by a window listening, with a white face and quivering lips, to the awful sounds which would come at times from the different scenes of slaughter on the soft September breeze. Perhaps Raoul de Maurepas was

at last among the victims. Yes, it is true she knew that he had escaped after the 10th. She had the few words which told her so safely hidden away; but that was so long ago, what might not have happened since? The Mignard portrait smiled down on her from the wall as it used to do in the Hôtel Drou. Did that lovely face ever cloud with the weight of such trouble, she wondered vaguely once. Was it always sunshine and flowers, Marly and Fontainebleau, in those old days of the Roi Soleil? She did not think, nay, perhaps she would not have understood, that the assassins of the Abbaye and elsewhere were merely exacting terrible payment for the long past glories of dead kings, which had been built up on the wrongs of the people. She did not think of all this, she only thought that the careless beauty of the face smote her with a sense of injury, like that other self of such a short time

back, on which she looked with a sort of envy.

"If thou wert but at Cennes—anywhere out of Paris," said Madame de Drou once. "My child, I promised to protect thee, and how have I kept my word?"

Gabrielle knelt down by her, and put her arm round her.

"Calm thyself, my aunt," she said, though her own hands were cold and shaking with terror; "if I were away I should come back again. I could not be parted from thee."

"I could die myself, as a De Thouars knows how," went on Madame, piteously, "but thee, Gabrielle, so young—"

"It is no worse for me than for thee, and am not I also a De Thouars? Besides, there is this letter which promises us safety?"

But Madame obviously placed little confi-

dence in so mysterious a communication, and refused to be comforted.

So the night wore on, and it drew towards morning, though the sky was darker than it had yet been, and that strange chill struck on the air which comes at the turn of the night.

Gabrielle had wandered back to her post at the window, though there was little to be gained by such a watch; but suddenly the silence which had prevailed in the immediate neighbourhood was broken, and there came the hurried tramp of many feet down the narrow street for the first time that night. Her heart gave one bound, and then seemed to stop beating, for she fully believed the end had really come. Babette, who had fallen asleep, worn out with fear and watching, awoke, and flung herself on her knees in extremity of terror. Gabrielle would fain have turned back into her aunt's room, but

she seemed powerless to move from the window, and she stood there, unconscious of Babette's prayers and tears from the other side of the room.

"Mademoiselle, for the love of the blessed saints come away, they will see you, and then they will kill us all," she entreated; but Gabrielle felt as if her limbs had turned to lead, and as if some imperative instinct bade her gaze at the scene without.

The footsteps rang in some sort of rude time, and many voices were uplifted in an awful chant, which she heard then not for the last time, a song which seemed to freeze the blood in her veins as she listened and looked, for the dance was the Carmagnole. A glare of torches lit up the street, and, as she stood, stricken and dumb with horror, the red light smote full on one face upturned—the face of a woman—a face which she recognised at once, which seemed to grow suddenly out of the

whirl of smoke and flame, in the midst of the trampling, shouting crew, in a sinister halo of pikes and axes and torches, the face of Philippine Drouet. In its fierce and terrible beauty it seemed, to Gabrielle's strained and bewildered imagination, like the head of a Medusa, and as if it exercised the same baneful influence, for, though she would have given an empire to have covered her own, to have shrunk back, she was powerless, and her arms hung as if benumbed. That Philippine saw a woman's figure at the window was certain; that she recognised her was very unlikely; but she beckoned to her with a derisive gesture.

"Good night, citoyenne," she shouted, as she halted beneath the window, "this is a little entertainment, this. Permit me to present to you one of your friends. La Lamballe has gone another way to make a visit to a distinguished person."

What more she said was lost in the wild uproar that prevailed round her, but Gabrielle's swimming eyes could see, upheld on a pike, and looming through the smoke of the torches, a woman's severed head, which her reeling senses told her was familiar to her. How often had she seen it, crowned with jewels, powdered and perfumed, at the Tuileries! at Madame de Drou's receptions, —and *now* . . . She did not hear other voices say that there were no aristocrats here—that this house was inhabited by good patriots, friends of Sabran; she did not see Philippine Drouet and her sisters resume the mazes of the Carmagnole, for as the grisly procession swept on, and the street returned to its normal quiet, she sank down on the floor and fainted dead.

CHAPTER XII.

UNDER THE SURFACE.

Tell faith it fled the city,
Tell how the country erreth,
Tell manhood shakes off pity,
Tell virtue lust preferreth.

RALEIGH.

AND where, all this time, was the Marquis de Maurepas? To solve that problem, we must come back to the events immediately succeeding the 10th of August.

We have seen that he, faithful to his allegiance, was one of those who had succeeded in remaining near the person of the King during the proceedings in the Hôtel de Ville. When that apparently interminable sitting was over, the royal captives were taken to rooms hastily prepared for them, in the upper part of the monastery of the

Feuillants. Here De Maurepas and a few more lay down at the King's door, wrapped in their cloaks, guarding him for, it might be, the last time.

They remained with him throughout the next and the succeeding day, and then—they were parted for ever. That evening the supper of the King and Queen was, for the last time, served according to court etiquette, the faithful five, who still remained, standing behind them. The King said but little, but he lingered long over the meal, knowing well that those familiar faces would soon be gone. One by one they knelt and kissed his hand, a last sad act of homage, and then Santerre's guard came in.

"I am indeed a prisoner," said the poor King, bitterly; "King Charles of England was better off than I. *His* friends were allowed to attend him to the scaffold."

The Queen did not speak; the iron had

entered into her soul too deeply; but the look she gave De Maurepas was more than sufficient, more, far more than any eager words of gratitude.

He and his companions were allowed one chance of escape: they were free—so far—to go where they pleased. They went down a back staircase, and, having put on borrowed clothes, for better disguise, passed out separately, to mingle with the crowd.

As Raoul de Maurepas paused, in some hesitation, for he had by no means made up his mind as to his wisest course, a private of the National Guard looked hard at him, and, to his extreme amazement, swiftly grasped his arm.

"Wait," he said, in a low voice, "and I will take you home."

Late as it was there was plenty of light in the street, but even to De Maurepas' quick eyes, his captor's face was entirely strange,

and his action, to say the least, suspicious. However, the Marquis, seeing nothing better to do, called his usual sang-froid to his aid, and did as he was told. The stranger, who appeared merely to be loitering outside the Feuillants, was evidently waiting for some one, for a man presently approached and whispered a few words in his ear, before disappearing in the crowd. The former then immediately set off at a round pace, retaining his hold on De Maurepas. He thus threaded two or three streets, and finally hurried his prize into a small grocer's shop, which he instantly locked and barred behind him. Then leading the way into the room at the back, he paused to take breath, while disencumbering himself of his arms, which obviously caused him some discomfort.

"You are at home now, M. le—citoyen, I mean," he said at last.

"You are extremely kind to say so," said

De Maurepas, "but may I ask why such a flattering honour is conferred on me?"

"Oh, as to that," said the grocer, "the fact is, I am an Auvergnat, and I know—that is, I have heard—that you are a good seigneur down there."

"And so you give me shelter, Monsieur," said De Maurepas, smiling.

"Just so," rejoined his preserver, "but for all that, I am a good patriot," he added, assuming a frown in a hurry, as if he had suddenly remembered the character he was bound to support, and busying himself in preparing food. He was evidently extremely reluctant to enter into any explanations, but he was, naturally, by no means reticent, and his guest speedily extracted from him all he really knew.

"You are in special danger, Monsieur," he said; your name was denounced to-day, though I do not know by whom, and you

might have been taken at any moment. Monsieur will be safe if he remains here, but he must assume disguise. All the world knows I expect my nephew to help me, and if Monsieur would adopt that character—"

"I have no doubt I might easily adopt a much worse one," said the Marquis gravely, "but pardon me if I fail to comprehend how you can take so much trouble for me, simply because you have heard of me down in the provinces."

"Well, then, M. le Marquis," said the grocer, whose heart was expanding under the influence of supper, "it is soon told. Though I have been living here for some years now, I have not forgotten the country down there, nor any of the faces I once knew. There was an old woman down there once—it is not likely that Monsieur remembers her, though she was a vassal of his. She was old, and sick, and poor, and the

winter was very hard. The harvest was nothing that year. Monsieur knows what the harvests have been often. She was gathering wood painfully in the forest, for it is hard to go without fuel when there is no meal in the chest, and the forester of the seigneur found her. We know, you and I, what the forest laws were, and he chose to believe that she was after some harm; that she was sent by her friends, that—I know not what. He was dragging her away,—if he had killed her, no one would have done anything to him—when a boy came quickly up, and bade him let the woman go. He durst not disobey, for the lad was the seigneur. Nay, more than that, the young noble led her home, lending his own arm to guide her; he sent her firewood enough to fill her shed, he brought her food and money himself. I was not there, but I heard of it, and I have never forgotten it."

Raoul de Maurepas looked up.

"That was old Madelon Dutollet. How did you—"

"Monsieur, she was my mother," said the grocer, simply, though his voice trembled.

"Ah, but it was so long ago."

"Good deeds live in remembrance," said Dutollet. "If you were only a boy, Monsieur, I was a man, and when I heard of it, though my mother died soon after, I vowed to myself that I would remember it while I lived."

Good deeds live in remembrance. The Marquis de Maurepas smiled half cynically, but he sighed too. Yes, it was long ago. Years had passed since he had seen the green forest, the mountains, the old château down in Auvergne—years during which he had thought very little of them, save when he heard from his intendant. And all this time this man had cherished the recollection of

that one impulsive action, prompted more by a boyish feeling of chivalry than by any principle of charity. There might have been many a bitter winter since, but the hearths had been black as far as he knew. He had not been there to see that his vassals had been clothed and fed. He had not oppressed them knowingly, he had simply forgotten them. A strong resolution rose up in his heart as he pondered. When all this mad revolt should be quelled, and things were settled, he would go down there and try to be of some use. Yes, it would be frightfully, appallingly dull, but he would do it. He looked curiously at his host, who was discussing his meal with placid relish.

"And how, Monsieur," he said, "since you show so much kindness to me, does it happen that you are a patriot at all?"

The man's whole expression changed at once. A certain grim determination came

over his face, ordinarily so stolid, and a fierce fire blazed up in his eyes.

"Shall I tell you, M. le Marquis?" he said, in a harsh low voice. "If we sat here for a week I could not tell you a tithe of the reasons. Yes, they make me hate to think that you are a noble, that you are, or would have been, my seigneur, with power of life and limb—"

"I had forgotten that," said De Maurepas smiling; "to be sure, so you are."

"Monsieur, I could not bear it. I was a lad, but my heart was on fire with the wrongs of our people, and I ran away. I made my way here, and, little by little, I prospered. That has nothing to do with it. My grandfather, a poor farmer, had still a little ground. He had sown his corn, and the harvest was nearly ripe, when a gay cavalcade came riding by—the Marquis and his friends and grooms. My grandfather, seeing they were about to

pass through his little field, besought them to spare it. Of course they gibed at him—there was a lady there too—and through the standing corn they rode. One of the grooms, as he followed, struck the poor serf across the face, and he, maddened for the moment, wrenched away the whip and returned the blow. That was enough—he was seized and flogged for that insult. Monsieur, he did not die under the lash, for he lived three days, but no one dared to succour him. I was a little child, but my mother led me secretly to his poor bedside, and I have not forgotten.

"My grandmother was turned out of that lonely home and sheltered with us for a little while, but she died of a broken heart, if such things be.

"I had a brother, older than I, weak and sickly from his childhood. He was forced to labour at the corvée, though they knew that he was dying—that he could hardly drag his

failing limbs to and fro. He came home one evening for the last time. Before sunrise he had died in our mother's arms.

"These things are true. I have seen them, and many more like them. It will take much to wipe the memory out of our hearts. I resolved that I, at least, would never submit to such things. I fled as I have said, and I vowed then that if there came a day when our wrongs should be redressed, I would lend hands, and strength, and life if need be."

Raoul de Maurepas had listened, his head bowed down. A sensation altogether new had possessed him while the tale was told, more painful and humiliating than he had ever felt in his life before, of shame for the sins of his forefathers, and relatively for his own. Suddenly he seemed to be brought face to face with a stern truth he had never cared to grapple with before. Yes, it was unpleasant, he the noble, the

darling of society, was humbled by this obscure person, who was moreover his preserver. There was stuff under the butterfly exterior, something quite different in kind, though alike in degree, to the chivalry which had carried him to the Tribune of the *Logographe.*

He looked up as Dutollet paused, and there was positively a blush on the handsome, refined face.

"And yet—you have saved me," he said simply, stretching out his hand across the table. "Denounce me to the section to-night, and I will not even *think* a reproach."

The excitement was fading out of his preserver's face as he took the offered hand.

"Monsieur," he said, "I have sworn it. I will save you."

He kept his word, though sometimes with infinite difficulty; but there was no one else in his house to tell tales, and the fugitive,

having adopted disguise, passed indifferently well for the expected nephew, even through the inquisition into different houses which preceded the September massacres.

He might perhaps have succeeded in leaving Paris, in spite of the rigid scrutiny to which all travellers were subjected; but he had two reasons for remaining, at all hazards, and he was not one to count personal risk in such matters.

He *might* find some means of communication with the prisoners of the Temple—and he was near Gabrielle de Thouars.

Gradually, under various disguises, he came to recognise many who were, like himself, plotting, almost against hope, for the King's release. Those disguises took many strange forms, even to that of the municipals of the guard surrounding the captives; and by as strange and subtle means did they manage to communicate with the latter.

Some obtained access to the lofty houses which commanded a view of that melancholy garden where the king and princesses daily walked, and assured them from thence that somewhere still there were loyalty and devotion only waiting to manifest themselves. Now it was a few lines written on a large sheet of paper displayed but for two or three moments; now a handkerchief of some bright colour was waved. Indeed Hue, the King's valet, was able to convey, occasionally, letters written with sympathetic ink, which the queen and Madame Elisabeth would find in the pipes of the stove in the ante-chamber.

Many and many a plot was devised for the deliverance of the hapless prisoners, and only just failed of execution, and in most of these the Marquis de Maurepas had a hand, the most reckless and daring of conspirators, as he had been the most indolent and careless of his kind in other days.

He ascertained very speedily that Madame de Drou and her niece were under the powerful protection of a member of the Convention, but though he sent to assure them of his existence and present safety, he did not hazard a visit, believing that it might possibly compromise their security. Still he waited and hoped. He was young and sanguine enough to believe that the outrageous anarchy he saw seething round him could not endure long, and, in spite of Dutollet's revelations, he was neither philosopher nor deep thinker enough to fully perceive that that very anarchy was only the rebound, the outcome, of centuries of oppression, misgovernment, and radical evil.

Once he thought that his toils were rewarded. The autumn had passed in fruitless endeavours on his part, and January brought the King's trial and its concluding tragedy; in strange coincidence, as to the month, with

that of his prototype in misfortune, King Charles of England, whose history had, through his captivity, so strong a fascination for him. Seeing the inevitable result of that trial, De Maurepas and a few others had, with ceaseless labour and all imaginable secrecy, organised a daring, if desperate, plan of deliverance. Three thousand young men, enrolled and armed for the purpose, were to rise at a given signal and raise an insurrection in Paris, supported, as was supposed, by the great General Dumouriez. On the day of the piteous deed, as the carriage of the doomed King passed the spot where several streets met, between the Portes Saint Denis and Saint Martin, there was a sudden confusion and the horses stopped.

Raoul de Maurepas and seven or eight others broke from the Rue Beauregard, and clearing a way through the crowd, and even

through the guard, dashed at the carriage, sword in hand, crying,

"Help, those who would save the King!"

This was the signal, but by some unaccountable treachery or mistake, it was not responded to, and the conspirators, foiled at the moment from which they had hoped so much, had no resource but to make good their escape. In the confusion they again penetrated through the line of the National Guard. A detachment pursued them, and a few were overtaken and killed, the others succeeding in eluding their pursuers.

On that day Léon de Sabran, who had voted for death at the trial, like all the Montagne, and indeed the Gironde too, was, with his usual acute interest in passing events and the humours of the populace, mingling with the crowd waiting here to see Louis Capet pass on his way to death. In spite of disguise, De Sabran recognised the

Marquis de Maurepas at once, though he lost sight of him almost as speedily.

"Where does he spring from?" he meditated. "I thought he had got away long ago, and left his plighted bride in the lurch. Well, so much the worse for him. I must find him out and be able to lay my finger on him if necessary."

However, for some time he took no steps in the matter. He did not feel any particular animosity towards his rival now. He believed he held the winning hand himself, and De Maurepas' chances under present circumstances were so bad that he could afford to despise him. Besides, he did not believe that Mdlle. de Thouars had ever cared very much about M. de Maurepas, or she would surely never have played into his own hands as she had done. But Léon de Sabran, though remarkably acute in his ordinary estimate of men and things, and watching the wheel of

fortune with a steady and accurate eye to his own interest, knew very little of the turns and windings of a woman's mind, though he prided himself on an intimate knowledge of that labyrinth.

END OF VOL I.

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